



EDUCATION AND THE NATION
AN INDIAN PERSPECTIVE



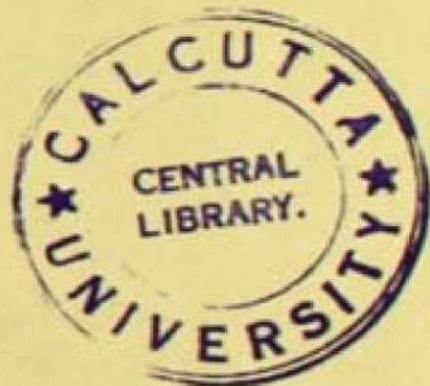
EDUCATION AND THE NATION

AN INDIAN PERSPECTIVE

BY

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To The Memory of

MY MOTHER WHO FIRST INTRODUCED ME
TO THE WORLD OF LETTERS ;

THOSE PIONEERS IN THE FIELD OF INDIAN
EDUCATION WHO BROKE NEW PATHS
AGAINST HEAVY ODDS ;

AND

—THE INSPIRING GURUS OF THE WORLD—
THIS HUMBLE TRIBUTE
IS REVERENTLY DEDICATED.



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INTRODUCTION

This book has grown out of a rather modest beginning in the shape of a number of papers contributed to different journals and newspapers on educational problems of a topical interest. Subsequently it led me to the thought that it might serve a useful purpose if these and other related problems were brought to a focus in the form of a book to be written in the over-all perspective of our national needs. These needs require to be examined in the light of the educational experience of the world to which recent experiments in the theory and practice of education have made significant contributions. I have accordingly ventured to have a second look at my own ideas expressed from time to time in the papers which I have already published. These are not many but, nevertheless, they deal with some of the more urgent problems of education that are peculiarly Indian and have been claiming our attention in recent years. These ideas have now been revised, modified and expanded, as necessary, to fit into the scheme of this book so as to present a coherent, and within its obvious limits, a comprehensive critical analysis of the state of education in India. Naturally, a good deal of the material now presented is new, not necessarily original, but in the sense that it was specially collected and made available for the general reader. The perspective is, of course, Indian, though I have tried to steer clear of any "ism's" which unfortunately sometimes affect or colour the outlook of some sections of our people even in matters educational. Each issue has been taken up to be treated in an objective manner, each argument examined in the context of reason and experience, each conclusion presented in the light of such access to data as have been available to the author. He is fully conscious of his own limitations in this respect and would, therefore, seek the indulgence of the critical reader that he might not miss the wood for the trees, or the chain for the links. For instance, missing the chain for the links has led to some unfortunate results. The attempt to overhaul University education without reference to secondary education, or conversely, to prepare a scheme of basic education which creates a vacuum between such education and higher



education, that is, without providing for a method of transition,—a link-up—between the two stages, has created quite a few problems of adjustment in the light of new needs and objectives.

A new social awareness of the value of education has presented some of the old, if fundamental, issues in a new garb. We are now asking if it is the ideal of education to bring about the perfection of the individual regardless of the society in which he is born ; or is it merely to prepare the individual for the role that he is to play as a member of the community or the nation—or even of the human society in its broadest sense—without regard to his own individual requirement or personal inclinations ? It should be the aim of the educationist to reconcile, if not to resolve, these conflicts. This book, it is hoped, would make it easier to understand the implications of these conflicts of theories and of practice, and thereby, perhaps, help to find a basis for reconciliation. The First Part of the book seeks to present the problem as one of Values and Perspectives in the social and national context, while the rest of the book is concerned with the system itself—its basis and superstructure as well as some of the specific problems that have grown out of, or around, it. At the end is the author's post-script—A Programme in Perspective. This embodies the author's own reactions to the challenging concept of a National Educational Policy and spells out some of the concrete steps that should be taken to resolve the difficulties, the deficiencies, the conflicts and the doubts that beset the path to progress, some of which have been dealt with in the textual survey.

The over-all perspective facing the Indian educational scene today is, without doubt, national, for we are still struggling to realise the fruits of our hard-earned freedom. A mere tabulation of our educational statistics, considered in the background of the present population explosion, will be sufficient to indicate that our approach towards effectively tackling our educational problems must, if we are to survive, cease to be parochial. The human being can no longer be treated as an isolated atom or a regional product. He is—irrespective of his place of birth—a rightful legatee of the whole world of culture and enlightenment. The unit in this challenging complex is the national group, each with its distinctive cultural traits, yet seeking a way of integration with yet larger wholes. There are special reasons why this point of view should receive emphasis in India.

INTRODUCTION

xi

Here is a country which is multi-racial, multi-lingual, multi-religious ; yet presenting a case of unity within unities ; a rare blend of human civilisation and culture, accustomed to give and take, and wedded to the belief in the unity of all mankind. Her children must be made worthy heirs to this noble heritage. Even if the perfection of the Indian citizen as an individual is to be our aim, it must unavoidably involve planning on a national plane which will ultimately enable him to realise the full potentialities of the multiverse where a kindly Providence has placed him. But we must know and we must understand. To-day, unfortunately, the Indian citizen functions in the midst of a debris, moral, intellectual and political. This is due, among other reasons, to his inheritance of the stupendous problems of rehabilitation, growth and development from a foreign regime. To rehabilitate him requires a massive national effort, a clear national perspective. Our problems should be set forth in that context ; for in the past she had too often paid the price for chauvinistic localism. The primary purpose, of course, is to identify the problems, to understand just why they are problems ; and next, how and why they are impeding our national effort for development. Naturally, we have to draw generously on collective experience. Nor must we forget that experience is itself an educative category. That experience, re-interpreted in terms of the Indian perspective, and of the contingencies that surround the Indian national effort, points clearly to the direction in which an answer can be found. To my mind, there is only one answer : Education, *Education for the Nation*.

This, incidentally, explains the title of this book, a humble contribution of a teacher who has spent more than forty years of his active life in an attempt to understand the problems of our educational system—if we can at all call it a system. The author has seen many of his youthful ideals smashed, many of his youthful dreams vanish into the thin air of futility. On the other hand, his long acquaintance with realities and his persistent effort to fight down his own predilections has led to a better understanding of the situation. It has provided a greater scope for the exercise of reason instead of being tortured by sentiments born out of wishful thinking, in evaluating the possible lines of policy. It gives him, as it undoubtedly gives all other educationists similarly oriented, some satisfaction to know that an earnest quest for a national educational policy has



begun. World experience has established the fact that a man is as good as his educational system. That is why all the leading countries of the world lay so much store on the education of their citizens, and spend so much money for their proper training and advancement. India has still to develop a well-integrated sense of values, a sense of purpose, in that direction. The author shares the hopes of all his countrymen that the fresh lead given by the Education (Kothari) Commission, whose report was published when this book was half way through the press and on which, nevertheless, he has freely drawn for some of his material, should help to create an atmosphere of urgency in seeking a solution for our manifold problems. If this book contributes, even in a small measure, towards understanding the immensity of the task with which the country is now seised, its author would feel his labours more than compensated.

Finally, it is my privilege to acknowledge with deep gratitude the unstinted help and encouragement I have received from my colleagues, students and friends. I must also take this opportunity of specially expressing my gratitude to Sri Jyotsnanath Mallick, M.A., LL.B., then President of the West Bengal Board of Secondary Education, for his ready assistance to the author in preparing some of the materials for this book ; to Dr. D. S. Kothari, Chairman of the U.G.C., Dr. Triguna Sen, till recently Minister of Education and now Minister for Petro-Chemicals, Government of India, and the late Professor Humayun Kabir, for their consistent encouragement and appreciative references. I am also obliged to Sm. Bharati Datta, B.A., for helping me to prepare the index and, last but not least, to Sri S. N. Kanjilal, Superintendent of the Calcutta University Press, and its workers for their zeal in seeing the copy through the Press, inspite of great handicaps, particularly in the later stages of its production ; and I am thankful to the authorities of the University of Calcutta for the readiness with which they agreed to print and publish this book. I must acknowledge also the deep debt I owe to those who have previously laboured in the field. My specific acknowledgments have been recorded in the body of the book. This book is thus a co-operative product and the author can claim only a small part of the credit, if at all, for the result which now awaits the critical judgment of his readers.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTION	ix-xii
PART ONE : EDUCATION AND SOCIETY (CHAPS I-V)	1-134
CHAPTER I. EDUCATION AND SOCIETY	1-27
Sec. I. The Individual and the Community	1
II. Values in Education	4
III. Illiteracy and Education	9
IV. Experience and Education	12
V. The Child and the Community	17
VI. Education and Urban Society	19
VII. Education and the Village Society	22
VIII. Concluding Remarks	26
CHAPTER II. EDUCATION AND THE NATION	28-57
Sec. I. The National Background	28
II. Anti-people Education	30
III. Movement towards National Education	36
IV. Concept of National Education Analysed	43
V. A National University ?	50
CHAPTER III. INDIAN IDEALS OF EDUCATION	58-79
Sec. I. A Way of Life	58
II. " Parā Vidyā " and " Aparā Vidyā "	61
III. Admission Tests	64
IV. Syllabus of Studies	65
V. The Teacher and the Pupil	66
VI. " Vidyā Vichāra "	68
VII. Discipline	69
VIII. The Position of Women	70
IX. The Farewell : Convocation Address	71



	Page
X. Assessment :	72-79
(a) <i>The Individual and Society</i>	(72)
(b) <i>Science and Technology</i>	(74)
(c) <i>Some Contrasts</i>	(75)
(d) <i>Secular Education</i>	(77)
CHAPTER IV. EDUCATION IN TRANSITION	80-104
Sec. I. An Interval	80
II. Towards New Values	86
III. The Present Imbalances :	91-95
(a) <i>The Changing Status of Women</i>	(91)
(b) <i>Clash of Cultures</i>	(93)
(c) <i>Imbalance in Literacy</i>	(93)
(d) <i>Inadequacies of Achievement</i>	(94)
IV. A Classic Fight—Rammohun Roy	96
V. Advent of English Education	99
VI. The Hindoo College, a New Landmark	101
CHAPTER V. EDUCATIONAL VALUES IN MODERN INDIA	105-134
Sec. I. A Search for Values	105
II. India Looks to West	108
III. Science and Education	111
IV. Science or Humanities	115
V. Women's Education	117
VI. Moral Education	121
VII. Student Behaviour	127
VIII. Education for the Mass or the <i>Elite</i> ?	128
PART TWO : INDIAN PATH-BREAKERS IN EDUCATION (CHAPS VI-VIII)	135-244
CHAPTER VI. RABINDRANATH TAGORE	135-162
Sec. I. Childhood Days	135
II. Tagore's Approach to Education	138
III. Sāntiniketan : A Theory	144
IV. Moving Towards a Change : Education as a Social Concept	149

CONTENTS

xv

	Page
V. Viśva Bhārati (1921) ..	154
VI. Viśva Bhārati University ..	157
VII. Sriniketan ..	158
VIII. Concluding Remarks ..	161
CHAPTER VII. MAHATMA GANDHI ..	163–204
Sec. I. An Aspect of Gandhian Philosophy ..	163
II. The Segaon Method ..	166
III. The " Folkehojskole "	175
IV. The Wardha Conference ..	181
V. The Zakir Husain Report : The Wardha Scheme	187
VI. <i>Nai Talim</i> ..	193
VII. Assessment ..	195
CHAPTER VIII. ASUTOSH MOOKERJEE ..	205–244
Sec. I. A Path-Breaker ? ..	205
II. Looking Back ..	206
III. Foundation of a University ..	211
IV. Winds of Change ..	217
V. Asutosh Arrives ..	220
VI. The Path-Breaker's Role : The Act of 1904 ..	225
VII. A Teaching University ..	230
VIII. " Freedom First, Second, Always " ..	238
PART THREE : EDUCATION—BASE AND SUPER-STRUCTURE (CHAPS IX-XVIII) ..	245–603
CHAPTER IX. PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION ..	245–261
Sec. I. Educating the Child ..	245
II. Some Child Educators ..	248–255
(a) <i>Jean Jacques Rousseau</i> ..	(248)
(b) <i>Johana Heinrich Pestalozzi</i> ..	(250)
(c) <i>Johanne Friedrich Herbart</i> ..	(351)
(d) <i>Friedrich Wilhelm August Froebel</i> ..	(252)
(e) <i>Maria Montessori</i> ..	(253)
III. Pre-School Education in India ..	256



	Page
CHAPTER X. PRIMARY EDUCATION	262-302
Sec. I. A Historical Retrospect	262
II. Legislative Measures for Compulsory Education (1911-47)	270
III. Basic Education : an Exposition	278
IV. Basic Education : a Critique	281
V. The Present Position of Elementary Education	288
VI. The Age-Group	289
VII. Aims and Objectives of Elementary Education	292
VIII. Curriculum	295
IX. Course Content : Teachers	299
CHAPTER XI. SECONDARY EDUCATION (A COMPARATIVE STUDY)	303-348
Sec. I. Definition	303
II. Secondary Education : Far and Near	306-348
(a) U.S.A.	(306)
(b) U.S.S.R.	(309)
(c) England	(316)
(d) China	(325)
(e) Japan	(325)
CHAPTER XII. SECONDARY EDUCATION IN INDIA	349-399
Sec. I. Preliminary	349
II. Historical Highlights	351
III. The Sadler Commission	354
IV. From Sargent to Mudaliar	360
V. The Secondary Education Commission (1953-54)	365
VI. Education Commission (1964-66)	376
VII. A New Deal	382
VIII. A Re-assessment	391
IX. An Alternative Proposal	396
CHAPTER XIII. TEACHER EDUCATION	400-427
Sec. I. The Teacher and the Child	400
II. The Child Mind	403

CONTENTS

xvii

	Page
III. Learning a Subject .. .	409
IV. Curriculum .. .	411
V. The Making of a Teacher .. .	414
VI. "In-service" Training .. .	417
VII. The Indian Case .. .	419
CHAPTER XIV. HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA : A HISTORICAL ANALYSIS .. .	428-456
Sec. I. Beginnings .. .	428
II. Charles Wood's Despatch (1854) .. .	433
III. The Act of Incorporation, 1857 .. .	436
IV. Progress of University Education (1854-1902)	439
V. The Indian Universities Act, 1904 .. .	446
VI. The Sadler Commission .. .	450
VII. The Sequel .. .	453
CHAPTER XV. HIGHER EDUCATION IN FREE INDIA .. .	457-504
Sec. I. Introduction .. .	457
II. Aims and Objectives of University Education	459
III. The Radhakrishnan Commission, 1948 .. .	462
IV. Types of Universities and Colleges .. .	470
V. The Education Commission (1964-66) .. .	475
VI. The Three-Year Degree Course .. .	482
VII. Higher Education : Expansion or Consolidation ?	491
VIII. University Autonomy .. .	498
CHAPTER XVI. GENERAL EDUCATION .. .	505-527
Sec. I. The Concept and its Justification .. .	505
II. Objectives and Purposes .. .	509
III. The Programme .. .	511
IV. Assessment .. .	519
CHAPTER XVII. TECHNICAL EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT PATTERN AND MAN-POWER NEEDS .. .	528-573
Sec. I. Education, an Instrument for a Career .. .	528
II. Early Beginnings .. .	532
III... Technical Training and Employment Pattern ..	538



	Page
IV. Employment Pattern and Manpower Needs ..	545
V. Towards a National Policy : Proposals of the Education Commission	552
(a) Hurdles against full Employment ..	552
(b) Technical Education—The New Proposals ..	557
(1) <i>Organisation</i> .. ..	.. (557)
(2) <i>Types of Institutions and Skills</i> ..	.. (559)
(3) <i>Inter-dependence of Technical Skills</i> ..	.. (565)
(4) <i>Rectification of Imbalances and Integration with General Education</i> .. ..	.. (566)
(5) <i>The Question of Standards : Mechanisation</i> (571)	
CHAPTER XVIII. ADULT EDUCATION	574–603
Sec. I. The Problem	574
II. Agencies of Adult Education	578
III. Some Impediments	582
IV. Adult Learning	586
V. The Structural Aspect	589
VI. A Programme for West Bengal	594
VII. Education for Peace	602
 PART FOUR : THE NATION AND EDUCATION : PROBLEMS (CHAPS XIX-XXV)	
CHAPTER XIX. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS	604–634
Sec. I. Quantity <i>versus</i> Quality	604
II. Deterioration in Standards	611
III. Standards in Higher Education	621
IV. Recommendations of the U.G.C. Committee ..	628
 CHAPTER XX. CO-EDUCATION	635–674
Sec. I. What is Co-education ?	635
II. The Problem	639
III. The Case of India : The Existing Position ..	643
IV. Early Experiences	647



CONTENTS

xix

	Page
V. Co-education in Some Selected Countries ..	649
(a) <i>England</i> .. ..	.. (649)
(b) <i>France, Italy and Spain</i> ..	.. (653)
(c) <i>Switzerland, Germany and Russia</i> ..	.. (654)
(d) <i>Bulgaria</i> .. ..	.. (655)
(e) <i>Scandinavian Countries</i> ..	.. (655)
(f) <i>U.S.A.</i> .. ..	.. (655)
VI. The Segregated School <i>versus</i> The Co-educational School. ..	657
VII. Some Specific Issues ..	663
VIII. Should there be Co-education in India ? ..	669
 CHAPTER XXI. EXAMINATIONS ..	 675-705
Sec. I. Introduction ..	675
II. Objectives of Education ..	676
III. Essay-type Examinations ..	680
IV. Objective Testing ..	688
V. Assessment of the Essay and the Objective Types :	693
(a) <i>Question Setting</i> .. ..	.. (694)
(b) <i>Grading</i> .. ..	.. (695)
(c) <i>"Grace" Marks</i> .. ..	.. (697)
(d) <i>The Choice before Us</i> .. ..	.. (700)
VI. Concluding Remarks ..	700
 CHAPTER XXII. THE LANGUAGE QUESTION ..	 706-762
Sec. I. The Question ..	706
II. A "Link" Language ? ..	708
III. A National Language : Hindi ? ..	720
IV. A National Language : English ? ..	724
V. The Case for Hindi, further Considered ..	729
VI. Hindi as a School Subject ..	731
VII. The Three-Language Formula ..	737
VIII. The Place of Sanskrit ..	741



	Page
IX. The Medium of Instruction	749
X. English as a Functional Language ..	756
CHAPTER XXIII. STUDENT INDISCIPLINE ..	763–803
Sec. I. What is Indiscipline ? ..	763
II. Students and Politics ..	771
III. Students and Education ..	775
IV. In Search for Remedies ..	782
V. Abolish Students' Unions ? ..	792
CHAPTER XXIV. EDUCATION AND POLITICS ..	804–824
Sec. I. The Angry Young Men ..	804
II. The Politics of Power ..	806
III. A British Legacy ..	809
IV. Democracy and Education ..	812
V. The Politics of the Street ..	815
VI. Government and the University ..	818
VII. The Dead End ? ..	822
A PROGRAMME IN PERSPECTIVE ..	825–860
INDEX OF TOPICS ..	861



CHAPTER I

EDUCATION AND SOCIETY

I

The Individual and the Community

Education, in the modern democratic world, is not only its greatest asset, but also its greatest problem. It is no longer a matter of individual attainment but is imbued with a social purpose. It must, ultimately, qualify the individual for the duties and responsibilities of citizenship as well as for the larger role that he must be called upon to play as a member of the Great Society. Education, in other words, is not only a means of self-improvement, of achieving an integrated personality, but a lever of social and national progress. Narrowly interpreted, education, if devoid of its social or moral purpose, may benefit an individual, or a group, without any sense of obligation to the larger interests of society, or the long-term interests of the nation. In the early days of British rule in India, English education, at the same time as it produced the pioneers of social reform as well as the leaders of the intellectual renaissance in India, also produced a queer type of denationalized Indians, social misfits, so-called corruptors of the youth. It produced also a tribe of snobs, or worse still, purveyors of a cocktail culture. Such specimens, even now, are to be found here and there. That this kind of exclusiveness or superciliousness is inconsistent with the real spirit of a good education is now widely recognised. But the fact remains that in a country where every three out of four persons are still illiterate, the educated and the non-educated classes remain separated from one another by a glaring social distance which, in spite of the fact that political pressure as well as economic compulsions have lately been operating towards eliminating this gap in practical life, is still a factor to be considered in formulating schemes of educational expansion. The emphasis on primary education as on adult education is undoubtedly governed, among other reasons, by this socio-logical factor. The reaction against the "public schools" in India also derives unmistakably from this factor. There are also factors



like caste, language, sectarian and denominational influences, which retard the integration of the individual with the larger community. The role of education as a force for integration is now being increasingly recognised.

Lest the problem of the integration of the individual with society should be misunderstood to mean the denial of the individual's right to personal development through an educational system adjusted to his needs, a word of caution might be sounded. It would be suicidal for the nation to preach or accept the cult of mediocrity. While the need for the education of the common man, of the masses, should be recognized as a high priority, as an inescapable imperative in a democratic egalitarian society, every facility should be provided to discover and encourage talent and genius, to build up an aristocracy of intellect which would interpret the philosophy and culture, the thoughts and aspirations, the aims and ideals of the country and provide leadership to the community. At the elementary stage, there is need for looking after the individual development of the child ; in fact, how we tackle the child's education at this stage will govern his future course of development. A blending of individual needs with the need of developing a socially integrated personality is always a difficult process. But, difficult or not, that must be the supreme test of a sound educational system. In fact, in a developing country, the success of the experiment will depend upon not only the quantum but even more on the quality of popular participation in this gigantic adventure, for, as John Dewey has said, " Democracy has to be born anew every generation and education is the midwife". Not merely men who have been initiated into the rudiments of learning but, in particular, those who have come out of the institutions of higher learning, must take part in this periodic renewal of the vital processes of democracy.

It is in this sense that the question of what is called " General Education " has appealed to a large section of educationists. The Indian Universities (Radhakrishnan) Commission (1948-49) spoke of education aiming at imparting " knowledge of life as a whole ". The Commission placed a high value on General Education, the purpose of which was to foster an integrated knowledge and " to make available to the student, and to inspire him to master, wisely selected information as to facts and principles, so that he will have represen-

tative and useful data on which to base his thought, judgment and action". Also, as the Committee of the University Grants Commission on General Education (1961) pointed out, "a certain measure of integration of thought, emotions and loyalties is possible if the learner is helped to organise and reorganise his experiences not only around his need to be a socially effective individual but also around his individual and personal needs". All educational effort, the Committee further points out, is based on the postulate that modification of behaviour is possible through education. It is widely felt that the lack of integration of thought, emotions and loyalties, betrayed so often by groups of educated young men in India in their recent behaviour patterns, is at least partly due to the fact that their education has been lopsided, defective and incomplete. In fact, if there has been any modification of student behaviour in recent years, it has only added to our anxieties. There are so many factors responsible for this unhappy state of things, one of which undoubtedly is the failure of education (which, I am afraid, must include the failure of our teachers also) to influence and guide the thought, emotions and loyalties of our distracted student bodies. It compels a new look at our education system as a whole and a thorough re-examination of its aims and objects. It is in this context that a scheme of "General Education" integrating the three broad areas of the Humanities, the Natural Sciences and the Social Sciences has been receiving considerable attention at the hands of the University Grants Commission.¹

This discussion leads to the obvious conclusion that neither a large figure of student enrolment by itself nor a large number of well-furnished school and college buildings, by themselves, would satisfy the real educationist, however impressive statistically the figures may be. The Indian educationist, in common with educationists all over the world, is not merely interested in the magic of aggregates but wants to go beyond the figures to assess the quality of the education given. Here there is sufficient cause for anxiety, for searching of hearts, for radical re-thinking.

¹ The Indian Education (Kothari) Commission, 1964-66, however, makes only a brief reference to General Education on p. 376 of their report.



II

Values in Education

Human society is also organized on the basis of its economic, cultural or professional interests, for we live in a pluralistic world where each sector of our social life claims autonomy over its own sphere. The State is one such group, with this difference from other groups that its membership is compulsory for the citizens and that it has the supreme coercive power at its disposal. There are other groups organised on the basis of educational, intellectual or academic interests. Such bodies also press in varying degrees their claims for autonomy. What should be the extent of this autonomy is an issue which we shall discuss in the appropriate place. It is necessary to point out here that far from a limitation of its powers, the authority of the State has never been so extensive, even in the days of absolute monarchy, as it is now under the sanction of democracy. The concept of the Welfare State has operated as an ouster for all local, regional or group conceits. Today the life of the collectivity known as the State and the lives of its citizens have become practically co-terminous. Or, we can put it differently by saying that the citizen and the State are, in a functional sense, complementary to each other in the modern democratic Welfare State. This, at any rate, sets the aim and purpose of the political organization of the State, and the large range of constraints to which the citizen has subjected himself is ultimately meant to define the scope of his own freedom as a member of a larger community, for the entire weight and authority of the State is now geared to the task of enriching the life of the citizen in all its aspects. In education, as in other spheres of his life, the State, by common consensus, plays today a big and decisive role.

In fulfilment of its new role the State in India has had to be active on two fronts. On the one hand, it had to clear the mess left by nearly two hundred years of foreign rule. The professed objects of English education, as we shall presently see, were suitable to a situation which we have now left behind and which are no longer acceptable in the altered circumstances of today. To be sure, we shall continue to require clerks ("writers") and other administrative

staff ; but we shall require many others not merely for filling up the subordinate cadres of the clerical or administrative departments but for taking up positions of power and responsibility, including the highest that are in the gift of the nation. We shall require engineers and better engineers, doctors and better doctors, teachers and better teachers, the last not the least among them, and so we have to re-orient our educational system towards that end. But that is not the only problem that engages the attention of the country. There is the other and more fundamental problem of dealing with a tradition-bound society. The preference of our middle classes for white-collar jobs, their aversion to courses that require operational skill or hard manual labour or outdoor work, their general unwillingness to face the risks of an industrial or commercial career —these set formidable temperamental and sociological impediments against the efforts of the State to bring about a radical social transformation of India, in the shortest possible time, with the help of science and technology. The awareness of the Government of India about the existence of these impediments is borne out by the clear enunciation of policy in their Resolution, dated the 14th July, 1964, setting up the Education Commission in which they declare that “education, especially in science and technology is the most powerful instrument of social transformation and economic progress and that the attempt to create a new social order based on freedom, equality and justice can only succeed if the traditional educational system was revolutionised, both in content and extent”. It is also good to know, in the words of the same Resolution, that the Government of India “are convinced that education is the key to national prosperity and welfare and that no investment is likely to yield greater returns in human resources of which the most important component is education”.

The Education Commission's attitude in regard to the role of education in India is forcefully stated. After referring to Robert Heilbroner's remark that the path of a traditional society toward economic development is like “a great ascent” and that the essential condition of its success is human “change on a grand scale”, the Commission observes : “If this change on a grand scale is to be achieved without violent revolution, there is one instrument, and one instrument only, that can be used : EDUCATION.” The



Commission is careful to point out that the emphasis on the social purposes of education, on the need to use it as a tool for the realisation of national aspirations or national challenges, does not imply any under-estimation of values for the individual, and proceeds :

" In a democracy, the individual is an end in himself and the primary purpose of education is to provide him with the widest opportunity to develop his potentialities to the full. But the path to this goal lies through social re-organization and emphasis on social perspectives. In fact, one of the important principles to be emphasised in the socialistic pattern of society which the nation desires to create, is that individual fulfilment will come, not through selfish and narrow loyalties to personal or group interests, but through the dedication of all to the wider loyalties of national development in all its parameters." ²

There have been, in the past, bold experiments in the field of education, and the world's experience has been enriched by the process of re-thinking that they involved, leading to a fresh assessment of values. Great names recur in the history of education to show that man is ever on the quest for new values in education, for the realisation of truth and beauty in life, for the attainment of perfection in man. It is thus that new values in education have emerged to clamour for acceptance. It is thus that in India the necessity of women's education up to the highest stage has now been recognised ; that co-education has been accepted as a new value over large areas of the world ; that child's education has received a new meaning, and found a new approach ; that movements like the New School Movement or the People's Colleges or the Segaoon Method have revealed new aspects of educational theory and practice ; that even now bold experiments are under way in the sphere of teacher education, in school organization, in the examination system and in the use of audio-visual aids in improving the quality and spread of education. These are but some random examples of the experimental frame of mind that has created the famous educators and educational thinkers of the world among whom we count such great names as those of Luther, Comenius, Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Froebel, Montessori, Grundtvig, Dewey, Gandhi and Tagore, to name only a few. They have been the path-breakers in the field of education,

² Report of the Education Commission (1964-66), Chapter I, p. 4.



each in his own way. But they have all drawn our attention to the need of the educational system to re-invigorate itself with the tonic of new ideas. Quality, not quantity, has been the object of this unceasing search for new ideas as well as new values in education.

In this periodic re-assessment of educational problems, the point of view has also varied. There is little reason to demur to the definition of education as something that brings out the powers and capacities of the individual, physical, mental and spiritual, or that helps to build up the personality of man, for it does not necessarily detract from the social aspect of education. This is what may be called the individual point of view of education, for its aim is to make every individual a better man ; a point of view which, we may recall, was implicit in the ancient ideals of education in India. The modern emphasis is still on the individual, but not apart from society and the nation. These aspects of the educational system explain the new interest that society and the State are taking in giving it a new shape to produce better citizens fully adjusted to society and to the values that it upholds. This is particularly true of democratic societies which seek to identify individual with social needs. Education, in such a context, becomes as much a product as a tool, as much an end as a means, the means to build up a better society.

Those who are attached to the democratic ideal would like to see in the aims and objectives of the educational system a reflection of those essential values on which democracy is based. The preference for residential institutions, to take an example, is now an accepted device for building up the personality of the student, to inculcate in him the virtues of self-discipline, to test his capacity for leadership, to develop his mental and intellectual powers through the medium of friendly discussions, debates, disputations and so on, for which living together provides so many opportunities. At the same time, social virtues like tolerance, mutual adjustment, capacity to see and appreciate the other man's point of view, co-operation, selflessness and the like are also among the valuable results of community life in the residential institutions. It is said that in the Danish People's Colleges, teachers share the same table as students while the head himself takes food with them once a week. This kind of student-teacher relationship which, in both its intellectual

and social aspects, is invaluable to both the participants in the educational process was a fundamental feature of the old *Gurukulas* as well as of the ancient *Brahmaçaryaśramas* of the *Kulapatis* of Vedic times in India. In those days, the life of the young learner was integrated, through the *Varnāśrama Dharma*, with the subsequent stages of life. In this way, a balance was achieved between the needs of the student for self-realization with those of the society which he was preparing to enter and serve. In modern times, man's relation to society is even more emphasised. That is why educational opinion today looks down upon schools that function no better than as teaching shops, like, for instance, most of our private tutorial institutions, and may be, some regular schools and colleges too. As a teacher has succinctly put it, "a school is more than a place of intellectual instruction ; it is more, even, than an agency of moral instruction ; it is a training ground for citizenship. It is a preparation for life".

If, as J. L. Paton has said, education is the science of the world as it is capable of becoming, the impact of education can hardly be confined to the society of *individuals*. It equally affects the society of *nations*. A defective education may produce unadjusted individuals. It may, under certain other conditions, produce brain-washed automatons, conditioned to a regime of greed, hatred and power, who may pose a threat to the world community. A country where illiteracy is widespread is, to take another example, a drag on the world at large. Every such area where darkness engulfs the human spirit becomes a danger spot for humanity as a whole. Society, the Nation, the World Community—they are no longer mutually exclusive terms. One simply cannot live in an ivory tower today any more than large masses of men can live in the countless caves and crevices of the Himalayas. There may still exist men with the mentality of an isolationist or a frustrated fugitive from life. They are somehow both unreal in a world of human beings who love each other, who fight with each other, who struggle together, who share in one another's difficulties as well as achievements, and who help to build up the Great Society as its significant units. Naturally, our educational system must be correlated to this great complex of inter-human relationships. Apart from fulfilling the needs of his own personal development, the drawing out of the powers of



his body, mind and spirit, as Gandhiji said, the individual must, through the education he has received, function as an effective citizen, contributing his instructed judgment to the direction of human affairs in his State, and as a world citizen where he has the power, in association with others, to make or mar the future of humanity. There are, in short, certain fundamental values of life and living to which man must render allegiance. He may elect to specialise in the field of Humanities or in Science and Technology, but he must never lose sight of the basic aims and objectives of education.

III

*Illiteracy and Education*³

It is a truism to say that mass illiteracy is a drag on social as well as national progress. It is education which opens the gates to knowledge, which prepares the mind to receive new ideas. It is this inflow which prompts progress. It is through education that art is wedded to science. It is not sufficient that a man should do a thing well ; he must know why he is doing it well, because that will provide him with the key to doing it still better. One is the *art* of doing it, the other—the *how* and the *why*—is the science of doing it. We call it the technique of doing it, the *know-how*. Literacy is based on the alphabets ; but education is knowledge, and this knowledge is not confined to books. It is possible for an illiterate man to be a man of considerable knowledge. In ancient times, when there were no books, knowledge was orally transmitted. So did the boy artisan pick up his skill from his artisan father. In this way, traditional skill of a high standard developed—without the help of the printed book or formal class lectures. Many a foreign visitor to India has borne testimony to the great skill of the illiterate Indian worker, or the knowledge, in his own line, of a supposedly ignorant Indian tiller of the soil. Yet both were illiterate, as millions of them still are. Speaking about half a century ago, Sir Thomas Holland said of the Indian worker :

" Anyone who has visited the Tata Iron and Steel Works will come away thoroughly convinced with the conclusion that with Indian labour you can tackle

³ See Chapter on Adult Education.

any industry for which the country is suitable. I have seen labourers in Sakchi who, only a few years ago, were in the jungles of the Santals without any education. They are handling now red-hot steel bars, turning out rails, wheels, angles of iron as efficiently as you can get it done by any English labourer."

If that is true of the Indian industrial worker, it is equally true of the Indian cultivator towards whom an expert trained in Western science and technique of agriculture is often tempted to assume a high-brow and condescending attitude. Yet it is another distinguished British expert, James MacKenna, who, in his *Agriculture in India*, writes :

" It is assumed that the Indian cultivator knows nothing about his own business : that anything good must come from the West....Real progress came only when it was realised that in India we have to deal with an agricultural practice which has been built up on the traditional custom of years and in which reside, though unexpressed and unexplained, deep scientific principles the reasons for which can only gradually be elucidated ".

Or, as another great scientist of European reputation, Dr. Voelcker, consulting Chemist to the Royal Agricultural Society, England, who had been deputed to submit a report on Indian agriculture recorded, as long ago as in 1889, that " the ideas generally entertained in England, and often given expression to even in India, that Indian agriculture is, as a whole, primitive and backward, and that little has been done to try and remedy it are altogether erroneous ", and that : " At his best, the Indian Ryot or cultivator is quite as good as and in some respects the superior of the average British farmer, whilst at his worst, it can only be said that this state is brought about largely by *an absence of facilities for improvement which is probably unequalled in any other country*" (Italics mine). Now, these expressions of opinion are quoted not to give a certificate of fitness to our workers as they functioned half a century or even eighty years ago, but to show that our concept of education is itself a heuristic exercise requiring a careful discrimination between illiteracy and ignorance or between learning and education ; or in other words, to show that an illiterate man is not an ignoramus, nor is a book-worm necessarily " educated ". Education is that which fits a man

for life ; it is a preparation for life. This life is lived in society, be it a society of individuals as a nation, or a society of nations as the international community. In this society, as one of its members, man lives his life. It is here that in the course of his daily life and conversation he is called upon to apply his powers, the powers of his body and mind, and to exercise his faculty, the faculty of judgment, for instance. The success of his education will naturally be in proportion to the extent to which it will make his role in society meaningful or will enable him to weave it into an experience, or series of experiences, that will play a significant role in his future life and activities. It is needless to add that the richer and more varied this experience, the fuller will be the life of men and of the community. Today the worker in the factory and the cultivator in the field must be brought out of their shells to share in the richness of experience that the vast extension of the fields of human knowledge has placed in their way.

Now, therefore, we have two propositions rolled in one. One is that education has a social perspective and the other is that education must be related in a certain way to experience which the community provides as well as promises. It becomes a process in which the learner himself actively participates along with others. Otherwise, he becomes a mere passive recipient of ideas or thoughts that do not form any part of his understanding and remain, in a manner, external to him. In case these ideas and thoughts are not related to his experience (actual or in prospect) they will not be real enough to hold his interest or attention. This kind of education is an abstract process, and generally causes an intellectual vacuum. On the other hand, the education of the Indian worker who received such high praise from Thomas Holland, or the Indian cultivator who got an equally high appreciation from James MacKenna, was not obtained through formal education (of which they had little in the academic sense) but was the product of a long line of experience in which they and their forefathers had participated.

To interest the child in the teaching of a subject, a good teacher, according to the new philosophy of education, should try to relate it to his experience or to create a new experience. Modern polytechnics or the workshop methods and the apprenticeship schools are all designed to create new experiences for the learner. This is



the whole theory of craft-based education. When the student himself handles the materials of the craft and the experience to convert them, he learns much more, and learns it more quickly, than if he were told to follow what the teacher said with, say, diagrams on the black-board. Moreover, when the child himself uses an instrument and works on the raw materials, he establishes a sort of rapport with the materials and the machine that he handles. For him, it is the sort of education that he enjoys having, and that forms part of his new experience. It must be realized, however, that such an education must not only be accepted as a philosophy but must be carefully planned. This requires a good deal of social collaboration as well as social adjustment. The education must be, on the one hand, meaningful for the individual and must, on the other, fulfil a social need. It must have, in other words, an economic value in so far as it equips the individual to be gainfully employed and a social value in so far as it satisfies a need of the community. Thus the individual's experience forms part of the sum-total of society's experiences. A good system of education integrates the experiences. It was thus that Gandhiji chose hand-spinning and hand-weaving as the basic craft to be taught at the Wardha type of schools, as these occupations were, as they still are, almost universally followed in the countryside. Work-based education is now practised over large areas of the globe, e.g. in Soviet Russia and the Republic of China. The Education Commission (1964-66) has also recognised its need. We have to recognise that the child, too, plays a creative role in society and he must be accepted as a valuable and significant member of the community. One of the latest ideas in the field of child education derives from the effect of environmental factors on his education and the necessity of selecting the right kind of experiences for the child to make the educational process a significant factor in the development of his personality.

IV

Experience and Education

At this stage, I make no apology to make a brief reference to the views of John Dewey on the idea of education through experience. The cultural ancestry of Dewey's thesis dates back to Rousseau,



if not earlier. Both Gandhi and Rabindranath seem to have drawn inspiration from it. I shall have occasion to dwell in some detail on the teachings and the experiences of these two path-breakers in educating the Indian child. For the present, the main lines of Dewey's thesis demand consideration.

The idea of education through experience presents a contrast to the traditional system under which most of the learning to which the student is exposed is an imposition from without. This is also called "newer education" by Dewey which is said to be based on certain common principles underlying the variety of progressive schools now existing. These are stated as follows :

"To imposition from above is opposed expression and cultivation of individuality ; to external discipline is opposed free activity ; to learning from texts and teachers, learning through experience ; to acquisition of isolated skills and techniques by drill, is opposed acquisition of them as means of attaining ends which make direct vital appeal ; to preparation for a more or less remote future is opposed making the most of the opportunities of present life ; to static aims and materials is opposed acquaintance with a changing world." *

The fundamental unity of the newer philosophy, says Dewey, is found in the idea that there is an intimate and necessary relation between the processes of actual experience and education. All experience, however, is not educative. Some are definitely mis-educative as, for example, experiences that have the effect of arresting, inhibiting or distorting the growth of further experience, or engender callousness or produce lack of sensitivity and responsiveness or may, by promoting extreme specialisation, land the individual in a groove or rut. Or, an experience that is immediately enjoyable may induce a slack or careless attitude which may subsequently modify the quality of future experiences and the individual may be yet too lazy to get the best out of them. Again, the experiences may be disjointed so that while each may be separately enjoyable or even exciting, they may cumulatively "generate dispersive, disintegrated, centrifugal habits". While it is the aim of the newer or progressive education to make experience a significant factor in education, mis-educative experience is quite common in the traditional schools which conse-

* Dewey : *Experience and Education*, pp. 5-6.



quently leads to maladjustment and failure or frustration and fatuity. Experience, to be valuable and significant, must be such as to promote further experience. In fact, every experience has two aspects : its agreeableness (or disagreeableness), and its influence upon later experiences. Now, every experience, Dewey says, lives on in further experiences. " Hence the central problem of education based upon experience is to select the kind of present experiences that live fruitfully and creatively in subsequent experiences." But this theory will be " wholly in the air " unless experience is so conceived that " the result is a plan for deciding upon subject matter, upon methods of instruction and discipline, and upon material equipment and social organization of the school". This is, of course, a difficult thing to achieve, because while the traditional system of education has its ready-made solutions, the new system has to build up a new theory based on experience which can be as varied and variable as human beings. The problem of the choice of experience adds to the difficulty, for there are some experiences, as already indicated, which are clearly " mis-educative". *

Our present interest lies in the fact that this experience of which Dewey speaks does not occur in a vacuum. Says Dewey :

" There are sources outside an individual which give rise to experience. It is constantly fed from these springs. No one would question that a child in a slum tenement has a different experience from that of a child in cultured home ; that the country lad has a different kind of experience from the city boy, or a boy on the sea shore one different from the lad who is brought up on inland prairies. Ordinarily we take such facts to be granted as too commonplace to record. But when their educational import is recognized, they indicate the second way in which the educator can direct the experience of the young without engaging in imposition. A primary responsibility of educators is that they not only be aware of the general principle of the shaping of actual experience by environing conditions, but that they also recognize in the concrete what surroundings are conducive to having experiences that lead to growth. Above all, they should know how to utilise the surroundings, physical and social, that exist so as to extract from them all that they have to contribute to building up experiences that are worth while." *

This implies that the new education must be interpretative of the experiences of community life as a vital element of the educative

* Dewey : *op. cit.*, pp. 13-14.

† Dewey : *op. cit.*, pp. 34-35.

process. It requires an extensive and deep understanding of the environment as well as of the social forces. It would not be an exaggeration to say, that, thus conceived, new education constitutes a branch of social science. The teacher of a progressive school imparting this type of education should become intimately acquainted with the conditions of the local community, physical, historical, economic, occupational and the like, in order to utilise them as educational material. A system of education, Dewey points out, based upon the necessary connection of education with experience must take these things constantly into account.

What, then, one may ask, is the role of objective conditions in this type of education ? What is the true nature of the connection between these conditions and experience ? Should we completely subordinate these conditions to the inclinations of the person to be educated ? If freedom is the keynote of such a type of education, does it follow that any importance that can be attached to these objective factors can only be at the expense of imposing external control ?

The point is that objective conditions cannot be completely shut out. This cannot be done so long as we live in society. Nor need it be done. The subjective conditions present in the mind of the individual—it may be a passing fancy or an ephemeral longing—do not postulate withdrawal of all recognition from the objective conditions or to subordinate the latter completely to the subjective or internal conditions. The mother feeding the baby shall not regulate its feeding time to coincide with the time whenever the baby is cross or irritable. The mother shall no doubt take note of the needs of the baby but must not dispense with her own responsibility for regulating the objective conditions under which the needs are satisfied. This means that the mother shall *select* a particular kind of interaction between the objective conditions and internal needs so as to secure the normal development of the child. So with the teacher. In other words, the teacher, like the parent, has the responsibility of selecting or arranging the conditions under which the child's experience of his needs, as much as of his surrounding, occurs and the responsibility is fulfilled by utilising the funded experience of the past. Progressive education being defined as "experience, experiment, purposeful learning", freedom does not mean a com-

plete lack of guidance or regulation. Thus freedom is not to be interpreted in terms of relatively momentary incidents but in the continuity of developing experience. This is, however, not the only limitation. The world in which we live means "a series of situations". It consists of, as the German Sociologist Leopold von Wiese has said, the attitude (Dewey uses the word "experience" of which attitude, we may say, is a product) of the persons who participate in a given situation and the objective factor of the environment. Dewey puts it in a slightly different form when he says the environment consists of "men and things". And when he says that the statement that individuals live in a world means that they live in "a series of situations", the conceptions of situation and interaction are inseparable from each other; also that the two principles of continuity of experience and interaction are not separate from each other. It is continuity and interaction in their active union with each other that "provide the measure of the educative significance and value of an experience". It is open to the educator to regulate the objective conditions. These include, besides equipment, books, apparatus, etc., the educator himself as a participant of the process, the material with which an individual reacts—in fact, the total social and the environmental set-up of the situations in which a person is engaged.

This brief summary of the new educational understanding is just about sufficient to show how figures and statistics alone, collected from official blue-books, cannot give a correct index of the substance of education. It is this substance, the quality, of education that interests society and the nation as much as, if not more than, its spread. Elsewhere reference will be made to such experiments as New Education (with its emphasis on the educative role of Nature) or the People's Colleges (meant for the "young adults") of Denmark or the Wardha type of education sponsored by Gandhiji or the Sāntiniketan of Tagore. While the "new education" schools would make the child grow with Nature (which included his total environment), the other experiments mentioned above were designed to fulfil definite social and national needs. The People's Colleges were intended to rescue the Danish people from the crisis of their nationhood, from moral, intellectual and political stagnation. The Wardha Basic Education Movement was Gandhiji's response to the

demand for universal mass education by his proposal to make it self-supporting and self-sustaining through training in some basic craft or crafts which fall within the range of the child's experience. Tagore's Sāntiniketan which owed its origin to the need for educating a single child—his own child—as Rousseau would educate his *Emile*—expanded into a University where the world would come together to live in a single abode, *Yatra Viśvam Bhavatyekanidam*, an example to inspire the rest of India. Meanwhile, within five years of the starting of Sāntiniketan, the Poet had to throw himself into the vortex of the nationalist upsurge that followed the partition of Bengal—not, as he saw it, as a form of negative protest (as exemplified in the boycott of British goods) but as a national awakening with a creative humanistic approach, and found himself not merely a philosopher of national education, but its chief architect, with an experience as thrilling in its initial stages as it was frustrating in its consequences.

V

The Child and the Community

In a sense, the preceding section was a diversion. There will be general acceptance of the idea that in education through experience a more organic relationship is established between the child and his proximate environment. It is also to be conceded that the integration of the individual with the community can only take place through an assimilation of the experience that life in the community can offer to the growing child and the lines of his intellectual, mental and spiritual growth that the community within its existing resources can provide. The difficulty would arise in connection with the selection of experiences that would aid the child in his attempt to grow. This would obviously depend on the basic values cherished by the community, and the behaviour patterns of those in immediate contact with the child. The child is imitative and soon develops "images". There is thus a close, reciprocal relationship between the child and the community, both proximate as well as indirect and remote. At home he faces his parents and close relations and he comes in contact with what may be called the first line of experiences. As the child is naturally self-oriented or ego-centric, these experiences

are interpreted in personal terms. Very often the subsequent delinquent conduct of a child has, on analysis, been found to have sprung from some previous personal failure in his relationships with his near and dear ones during his early childhood or of a frustrating or wrong kind of experience he may have had and which may since have lain deeply imbedded in his subconscious mind. A boy, for example, takes to violent conduct because his father had deserted his mother. A girl takes to shop-lifting because she felt that no one loved her and this is a manner of taking revenge on an unsympathetic society. Or a boy takes to crime because his fellow associates would otherwise consider him a black-leg, or, worse, a coward : or because he wants to make the grade and rise in the esteem of his circle of intimate friends and cronies. The point is that the proper growth of the child can be encompassed only to the extent that the family as the proximate medium, and the larger community which, as it were, waits outside the door to receive him, and that is soon enough, are able to provide him with the right kind of experiences. In the choice of experiences the family gets the opportunity of initial guidance. In this it enjoys certain exclusive advantages. The child's mind is malleable. He functions within a close circle and is completely under its care. The first directives of do's and don't's come from this circle and these make the initial impact on his mind. No statement was ever more true than that the home is the child's first school.

It is, therefore, to be suggested that any scheme of child education should start with parental education. A course in home science including a study of child psychology and child care and guidance may be made compulsory for all expectant mothers. Such training should be made easily accessible and, of course, free. Along with this, a system of counselling, to advise parents when in doubt or in trouble, may be introduced, particularly in urban areas. The counsellors may be given the power to visit the homes or neighbourhood areas, as friends and advisers, and assist juvenile courts with necessary data and background material in all cases of individual and group delinquency. While delinquency should be properly treated, it should, at the same time, be realised that it is the duty of the community itself to assist in the process of the socialisation of the child. In order that the community may do it in a proper manner,

the need is for an adequate system of community education based on neighbourhood areas. This type of education which should naturally be different from parental education, suggested earlier, should, nevertheless, form part of an integrated scheme of social education and service. It is also easy to conceive, though difficult to execute, that such a scheme would ultimately involve the complete removal of social disabilities and educational handicaps, propagation of sound ideas of health and hygiene and large-scale provision of playgrounds and recreational facilities, together with a determined effort to provide low-cost housing which is to follow an equally determined effort to clear the slums. By and large, the difficulties in the socialisation of the child in its two-way aspect are an urban phenomenon. In the rural areas also the problem exists but in a different form, though many of the features discussed above are common to the whole country.

VI

Education and the Urban Society

In India, urban education of the modern type had started long before attention was paid to the need for rural education. Institutions of higher learning, such as high schools, colleges and universities, were all city-based centres of learning. Administrative requirements (for a particular type of education for which the village people were not yet quite ready) as well as local demand explained such a development. Another cause was the decision to introduce English as the medium of instruction in the institutions newly set up while allowing the village schools to function undisturbed in their own traditional ways. Still another cause was that the leaders of Indian thought during this period of the beginning of Western education in India were, almost without exception, attracted towards such a type of education for various reasons. Rural opinion, William Adam's report notwithstanding, was not yet articulate enough to demand recognition. G. K. Gokhale tried at the turn of this century to draw the attention of the Government to the need and importance of primary education in this country. It was not till the 'twenties of this century that the first step was taken. In Bengal, it was only in 1930 that the first Rural Primary Education Act was passed.



This emphasis on urban education affected Indian society in many ways. Historically it immediately provoked a struggle between Orientalists and Anglicists. It is interesting to find that even Englishmen, in spite of the liberal traditions of their own country, were to be found on both sides of the fence. The greatest Indian figure that emerged in this clash, Rammohun Roy, was a man who had drunk deep of the springs of Indian culture and was at the same time versed in Western learning and literature and inspired by Western liberal traditions which stood out in sharp and irreconcilable contrast with the then obscurantist outlook of Hindu Orthodoxy. But Hindu traditional learning was obviously fighting a rearguard action. The last great founders of endowments in support of Hindu learning in Bengal were Rani Bhawani of Natore and Maharaja Krishnachandra of Nadia. But these patrons of learning gradually diminished in number and the support that some of the famous *tuls* and other seminaries of traditional or classical scholarship received from princes, zamindars and other munificent patrons of learning became increasingly scarce. It must, however, be put on record that some of the leading supporters of Western learning were Hindu *pundits* deeply versed in classical learning. The immediate consequence of this clash between Orientalists and Anglicists was to trigger off a social upheaval, to initiate the first movements for a radical transformation of the traditional class structure of Indian society, the spread of a new type of political consciousness (which, again, was at first necessarily confined to the urban classes) in the place of the old feudal loyalties, the emergence of a cultural *elite* to act as the spearhead of the drive for democratic institutions and ultimately to pave the way for the political emancipation of the country.

These were some of the ways in which education of the Western type with its bias towards science and technology and inspired with the spirit of free inquiry introduced certain dynamic principles of social change which ultimately broke the bounds of Hindu orthodoxy. There was, during the early phases of Indo-British cultural impact, a period of confusion and what may better be described as to topsy-turvy-ism in the world of values. India was willy-nilly involved in an entirely novel, if alien, set of experiences for which the country was as yet scarcely prepared. Be it said to the credit of the great assimilative power of Indian culture

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and of the peoples of India that they took the revolutionary changes in the structure and pattern of her education as well as in other spheres of her economic and social life in their stride ; but the journey to the modern age is strewn with the debris of discarded values. However, the most outstanding feature of the new pattern of education continued to be its urban orientation. That explains many of the deficiencies and difficulties in the way of approach to the solution of India's multifarious problems. Even now our rural people are dominated by urban interests. That the country's primary interests should now lie in the direction of removing the gap between urban and rural classes, particularly in the field of education, is now well recognised and has prompted a radical re-thinking on, and re-planning of, our educational system.

The urban origin of Western education in India is also reflected in the fact that it still heavily leans towards a liberal education in arts and science. This liberal education which ends in a University degree is part of an essentially urban culture. When once young people in search of a degree leave their homes, they are practically lost to the village. We shall discuss these problems again in connection with the manpower needs of India. It only requires to be emphasised here that there are large gaps in a type of education that leaves the village in a state of decay. The fact is that, with the exception of the people who are in love with the open spaces under the blue sky and like the unsophisticated people of the village with their simple ways and informal manners, there is a hypnotic spell of city lights which attracts men and women, young and old, the highly educated and the neo-literates, all towards the cities, to metropolitan areas. Apart from the many attractions and exciting diversions that city life provides, the employment potential of the urban areas offers a strong bait to the needy as well as to the adventurist. But they have to pay a price too.

Education, in short, while it enriches the human personality and is a powerful lever of progress, its job value takes a man away from his family and community to the place of work. It is an inescapable concomitant of education. The sociologist may point to the effect of such movement on the joint family, or the community life of the village where the child could grow with nature and in the care of people who have known him from his infancy. The anonymity of



city life, on the other hand, works in devious ways. Social control is weakened and with it community values. Still, the city is not spiritually dead. It is the hub of life, the place which promotes cosmopolitanism, the great mart of world's ideas and thoughts. It is the destroyer of old values, creators of new ones. It feels free to make experiments, not merely in scientific and technological laboratories but also in art, drama, cinematography, technique of government and administration, trade unionism and other fields, and provides the necessary leadership in collective effort. It builds pressure groups that check administrative inanity. It is the home of the Universities.

Various measures are under consideration to break this spell of the city. Curiously, the answer to the city considered as an evil is the establishment of more cities. The development of the suburbia, the growth of garden cities or satellite towns, the build-up of industrial estates and providing the more progressive of the villages with urban conveniences—all these are devices to relieve the problem of urban concentration. There is also an increasing tendency towards decentralisation of industries and a heroic attempt to disperse population by improving the highways and the waterways as well as the construction of expressways or national highways for trans-continental traffic. The Government in the Department of Education is sponsoring colleges with a rural setting. It has established Rural Universities, agricultural institutes, extension services. All these point to welcome trends of change which would ultimately minimise the gap between the city and the village by equalising the opportunities of development to all people in the town or in the country, which would ultimately lead to a symbiosis of culture, urban and rural, Western and Eastern and of to-day and to-morrow.

VII

Education and the Village Society

It is a commonplace saying that India lives in the villages. It is even now the case that of every 3 Indians, at least 2 are agriculturists or directly dependent on agriculture. The Education Commission (1964-66) has rightly devoted considerable attention to "Education for Agriculture" (Chapter 14 of the Report). Actually

education for agriculture is a special, and the most important, aspect of rural education. In any attempt to re-organise Indian society through education, India's vast rural areas have a pre-emptive claim for recognition. For a long time these areas had been relegated to the cold shade of neglect. There was a time when the whole countryside was dotted with village pāthasālās and muktābs. These and their teachers were an integral part of village life. The local zamindar took a lively interest in the welfare of these schools. The teachers who, in addition to a small monetary compensation, were very often sustained out of village produce or (dakshinā) presents received on festive and ceremonial occasions, were held in considerable esteem among the village folk. When, due to the lack of interest of British rulers, these institutions languished or gradually disappeared, there was no attempt to fill up the vacuum. As it has been already pointed out, it was not till the 'twenties of the present century that rural Primary Education Acts were passed and District School Boards were established. But there was no sustained drive behind these proceedings.

The class-orientation of English education in its early phases, and the lure of high living that it held for the ambitious and enterprising, helped indirectly to disintegrate rural life in India. With an inordinate pressure on agriculture, due partly to the decay of rural handicraft and industry, a persistent exodus of talented and ambitious people from the rural areas to the urban centres began to take place in ever-increasing numbers. This qualitative depopulation of the villages due to the lure of the city was aided and abetted by the deplorable conditions prevailing in those villages. This was another motive force behind the urban complex of our society as it was steadily emerging throughout the country at the cost of our rural areas. The situation was worsened due to the tendency of the leading members of the landholding classes to leave their village estates and settle in the big cities, being lured by their many attractions and amenities. It is no doubt true that these people who, in the social scale, constituted the new upper class, were the torch-bearers of a powerful cultural movement ; but it is also true that the culture that they represented was, until recently, an essentially middle class urban culture, divorced from the hard facts of village life. The system of English education had actually succeeded in

creating an almost unbridgeable gulf between the city people and the rural folk. A good many scions of the old zamindari houses, to be sure, maintained periodical contacts with their village homes on festive or other occasions. But with the partition of India and the abolition of the Zamindari system, even these periodic contacts have become few and far between, if not ceased altogether.

There is no doubt that, in spite of all its drawbacks or its anti-people effects, the system of English education has benefited the people in the urban areas. It is, however, true that the English educated people were, by and large, an alienated group. They were strangers to their own people. There were several reasons for these, one of which was that their education had no grass-roots in the facts of our rural life. Agriculture which was the mainstay of rural life did not form part of their school and college curriculum excepting as an academic exercise for students of political economy, and even they swore by Adam Smith and David Ricardo. Rural industries were looked down upon as a sign of economic backwardness, as indeed they were, but the critics lacked the sense of a clear awareness of the very important role that they played in India's rural economy and the reasons for their backwardness. Our educated classes were, on the one hand, dazzled by the range and depth of the literary and scientific achievements of the West and, on the other, suffered from a sense of helplessness in achieving progress on similar lines in a country like India, for they could only think in terms of big capital, big organisation, huge machinery, electric (or steam) power, mechanized transport, national and international markets. They had had no background of Indian culture or Indian thought and no actual experience of the ways of life of the people of their own villages who constituted four-fifths of India's teeming millions. They were intellectual misfits and, except for a few worthy exceptions, far removed from the heart-beat of Indian Society.

The situation has now radically changed. The dawn of freedom in India awakened a new consciousness of India's many needs, and created a new sense of urgency for speeding up the scientific and technological progress of this country on all possible lines. With the removal of the crippling bottlenecks inevitable under a foreign Government, India has been rapidly equipping herself with the capacity for a determined onslaught on her poverty and has

willingly submitted herself to the discipline and rigours of planning. But the unfortunate part of the current scene is that sufficient attention has not yet been paid to the necessity of re-orienting our educational system so that a significant sector of it could be village-based with the aim ultimately of producing a rural leadership to act as the spearhead of social change in the most neglected area of our economy. So far we had been busy with creating a super-structure without much thought being given to the foundation. That is why even such village-based services as the Community Development Blocks have been of limited utility as an instrument of rural development work. It is to be noted that while the super-structure can be imported, the foundation must be in the soil itself. This implies a large rural education programme, and the establishment of a close link with the higher centres of learning and research through a network of extension programmes. The rural education programme should not only operate from its village base for the benefit directly of our teeming millions in the villages but be designed to produce a band of pioneers who would go out and live in the villages, work with the villagers and furnish the necessary leadership and who would act as the vanguard of a silent, constructive, emergent social revolution.

Our system of basic education is to a large extent designed to remove some of the existing deficiencies. Still there is room for a further detailed investigation regarding the impact it has made on village life and to re-organize it, if necessary. The Soviet system of education provides for part-time education for agriculturists as well as industrial workers (in the evenings). Our planners might consider if exclusive schools for our active agricultural workers—the actual tillers of the soil—and for workers employed in the rural handicrafts and other village industries—should be established as part of an adult education scheme for the rural areas. I know this conceals an area of controversy, for such education, divorced from formal education, may, if interpreted narrowly, not only tend to perpetuate traditional patterns of productive activity but also maintain, socially speaking, present class-distinctions between the city-bred man and his rustic counterpart. This criticism, however, will lose much of its force when a common programme of education up to the age of 14 becomes free and compulsory for all, particularly when it is extended to cover the full twelve years of



schooling proposed by the Education (Kothari) Commission. The Commission itself has suggested that "work-experience" should be introduced as an integral part of all education so that it may be related to life and productivity. The Chinese system of education has made large use of this method in all its forms, though, it must be added, it is politically motivated and controlled and has certain undesirable features.

As the most pressing problem of integrating education with village society revolves round agriculture and as the welfare of the country waits upon the modernization and efficiency of our agricultural system, the importance of agricultural education needs special emphasis. The Education (Kothari) Commission has made important recommendations for organising and improving such education at all stages beginning with the primary and ending with the University and Research. It has also recommended the establishment of agricultural polytechnics for the training of skilled workers and middle-level technicians in agriculture for the supporting services needed by the former, for assisting in extension work, for many trades and industries based on agricultural products, and in the service trades. These would be post-matriculation institutes, and if properly oriented, would play a useful role in improving, modernizing and rehabilitating our agricultural system. It has been calculated that, not to speak of other technically trained workers, there would be a large demand for University or College trained specialists. Thus, the Agricultural Personnel Committee (1958) calculated that, on the basis of one village-level worker for every 5 villages (at present there is roughly one for every 10 villages), the total requirement for India would be 100,000 agricultural workers while the number of specialists to be trained by the Agricultural Universities at the graduate and post-graduate levels should number 250,000 to 300,000. This huge man-power need is quite consistent with the overwhelming importance of the improvement of Indian agriculture in all its aspects.⁷

VIII

Concluding Remarks

To sum up, it only remains to repeat that education is no longer an individual pursuit. Its primary aim remains, as ever, the en-

⁷ Report of the Education Commission, p. 356 ; see also Table 5.2, p. 94.



richment of the human personality, but this enrichment must be functional. It is not an abstract ideal divorced from the society in which a man moves and has his being. Education must be related to experience. It must at the same time be considered to be the most important instrument of social progress. At one time India faced the risk of social stagnation brought about by a static intellectual tradition. The impulse of history made the wheels of social change move forward on the march to a new destiny. The jolt was given by a group of non-official Europeans, like David Hare and Alexander Duff, ably seconded by a band of leading Indians of whom the foremost was Rammohun Roy. What was at one time regarded as a major step in a process of social transformation was subsequently, by the sheer logic of circumstances, raised to the status of a national issue. Some of the issues discussed in this chapter were also framed in the national context. Social planning is part of national planning. The reverse is also true. For a subject country struggling to be free of a crippling anti-people incubus, it is necessary to look both outward and inward. It must also combine eclecticism with patriotism. Western culture has introduced India to an empire of thought and opened the windows of her soul on to the vista of unlimited progress. It is a challenge for the re-building of our society and creating a nation that would fight its way up with the modern weapons of civilization.



CHAPTER II

EDUCATION AND THE NATION

I

The National Background

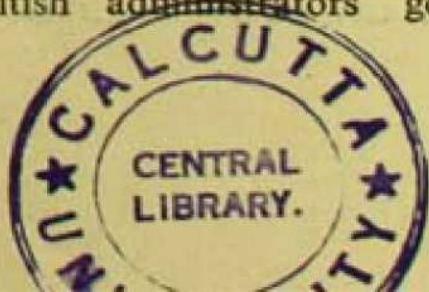
Where the nation is a fairly homogeneous collection of individuals who share more or less common racial features, speak the same language, profess the same religious faith, subscribe to common traditions, cherish the same values, have deep spiritual affinities and are bound by ties of emotion and loyalty to a common fatherland, the task of devising a system of education that would conform to the national genius would be a comparatively easy affair. There are, however, few States inhabited by such a homogeneous population, fully integrated, pulling together, united in their solidarity and fully alive to their national identity. What we see instead is very often a congeries of nationalities or of groups composed of heterogeneous elements, a diversity of race-and linguistic conceits that pass as a national entity depending on nothing more substantial than what Renan would call a spiritual unity, a sense of belonging together, or a common historical experience. The national integration of such diverse elements must have been and must continue to be a challenging task requiring the highest quality of statesmanship to balance the centrifugal with the centripetal forces. A well-devised system of national education is a *sine qua non* of the success of such efforts. Forces that operate to the contrary include segregationist policies, narrow group conceits and intolerance, discriminatory practices based on social status, wealth, caste, religion or language. Sometimes it is sheer short-sightedness or just indifference that allows the fissiparous tendencies to get the upper hand. Further, it must be understood that the nation requires not only to strengthen the forces of integration but the development of those qualities of the body, mind and spirit which reflect the national character.

If we turn over the pages of Indian history, we would appreciate how India had to struggle hard to develop a national spirit among the constituent elements of her heterogeneous population.



Not all these elements were natives of the soil ; but destiny brought them together and, in course of time, spread over centuries, gave them a common homeland in India. They grew together, though many of them also fought one another to obtain political supremacy. None of these ruling classes had yet developed a clear vision of one country, one nation, one flag. The whole country, as a result of these internecine rivalries, was criss-crossed with petty kingdoms, many of them no better than principalities or even feudal estates. There were attempts at Empire building, both by Muslim and Hindu rulers, and some of these empires lasted many years. But even in such cases the Central Power seldom cared to weld the subject peoples scattered over the different parts of the country, far and near, into one nation—for the simple reason that the idea of the Nation, still in its infancy in Europe, had not yet arrived in Āryāvarta. In spite of these deficiencies, a common Indian culture was developing. The broad humanism of India's epics, the countless fairs that mark the Indian cycle of seasons, the numerous places of pilgrimage scattered all over the country and sanctified by the holy lore of India, the catholicity of India's mystic poets, and above all, the emergence of an educated middle class, were slowly desegregating the Indian people, affecting the urban and the rural people alike, building up a common culture, establishing traditions and weaving a common destiny. India was slowly taking on a geographical shape apart from the cultural empire that she was building up within and without her borders. She was obtaining recognition in the trade-marts of the world where Indian merchandise commanded the custom and patronage of Royal Courts. But the accident of history that converted India from a geographical expression into a political reality, which ultimately laid the foundations of Indian nationalism, was yet to happen. The year was 1757 and the event happened in the fields of Plassey, in the district of Murshidabad in Bengal. The British trader paved the way for the establishment of the British Raj in India, and then begins the story of the rise of India's national consciousness.

In the story of this awakening, the efforts of the English rulers to foist on this country an alien system of education the underlying object of which was to produce a generation of "writers", clerks and interpreters to help British administrators govern this





country played a significant role. Suffice it to state here that Macaulay's prognosis was validated by the course of history. English education produced the leadership for a new nationalist movement in the field of education. I have advisedly used the word 'nationalist' instead of the word 'national'. The reaction to the British system of education was part of a nationalist attack that was designed to strike at the root of British Power in India. A 'national' system of education, on the other hand, was not yet precisely defined. The nearest approach to it took the form of a tentative alternative to the existing Western system of education hastily formulated by the new leadership who rode on the crest of the nationalist wave that swept over this part of the country during the anti-partition agitation in the first decade of this century and that shook the bastions of British Power in India. The movement betrayed a considerable *naïveté*, if not immaturity (due to lack of experience), and its outcome, after the partition had been annulled and the agitation died down, has been anything but edifying. But in the legacy that it left, modest by all current standards, there was at least one item, an intangible one to be sure, that heralded the birth of a new nation. India had regained her soul, her self-confidence. It was not the end but the beginning of a process. In the field of education, the word 'national' still carried the aura of protest, protest against a foreign language being made the medium of instruction and against the alien domination of educational institutions. The wider connotation of the word 'national' in its positive and creative aspects, was not yet on the agenda.

II

Anti-People Education (British India)

Poet Tagore in his essay on *Sikshā-Samskāra* (Educational Reforms) quotes Tolstoy as saying :

"It seems to me that it is now specially important to do what is right quietly and persistently, not only without asking permission from Government but constantly avoiding its participation. The strength of the Government lies in the people's ignorance, and the Government knows this, and will therefore always oppose true enlightenment. It is time we always realised that fact. And it is most undesirable to let the Government, while it is spreading darkness, pretend to be busy with the

enlightenment of the people. It is doing this now by means of all sorts of pseudo-educational establishments which it controls : schools, high schools, universities, academies, and all kinds of committees and congresses. But good is good and enlightenment is enlightenment, only when it is quite good and quite enlightened and not when it is toned down to meet the requirements of Delyanof's or Dournovo's circulars. And I am extremely sorry when I see valuable, disinterested, and self-sacrificing efforts spent unprofitably."¹

It would be convenient if some of the results of the anti-people policies of the British Raj towards India in the field of education were highlighted, not only in vindication of what Tolstoy said but because it would be relevant to our present enquiry.

First, it is conceded that the efforts of the British were aimed primarily at providing the Western type of education to Indians for the purpose of recruiting employees to help the administration, by qualifying them "for responsible and lucrative offices in the State". Special institutions were set up for the Muslims (the Calcutta Madrassa, 1785) and for the Hindus (Banaras, 1798) for the same purpose. Banaras was selected as the centre "specially to supply qualified Hindu assistants to European Judges".

Secondly, while it would not be quite correct to say that there was no desire, behind these efforts, to give Indians a liberal education in the arts and the sciences of the West, to provide them, in the words of Charles Grant, "a key which will open to them a world of new ideas", there is no doubt that the needs of the public services continued to be the dominant note of these efforts. Even in 1830, Mountstuart Elphinstone declared in a communication to the Commissioners of Indian Affairs that "the most important branch of education is that designed to prepare natives for public employment".

Thirdly, when the Charter Act of 1813 provided a sum of "not less than one lakh of rupees each year" for the "revival and improvement of literature and for the introduction and promotion of knowledge of the sciences", it was followed by a great controversy between the Orientalists and Anglicists as to whether by "literature"

¹ These sentiments sum up, almost word for word, the Indian attitude of protest against the British educational policy in India which, though it produced a number of intellectual giants who paved the way for India's national integration, resulted at the same time in the economic and cultural emasculation of India. This is not the place for tracing the history of the nationalist movement in India for it has been told and retold by more competent authorities and is available in published form.



the Charter Act had meant Sanskrit and Arabic literature or only English. The issue was finally placed before the Government and elicited the famous Minute by Macaulay in 1835 in which he declared that he had not yet found an Orientalist " who could deny that a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia". This standpoint was accepted by the Government which, in their Resolution of March 7, 1835, declared that the practice of supporting students of Oriental learning was to be discontinued and that " all the funds at the disposal of the Government would henceforth be spent in imparting to the Indians a knowledge of English literature and science". This set the tone of the Government of India's policy governing the future development of education in India. It was reflected in the establishment in 1857, after the British model, of the three great Universities of India, in Calcutta, Bombay and Madras, Calcutta preceding the other two by a few weeks.

Fourthly, the Government accepted a Resolution in 1844 which laid down that for appointment under the Government, preference would be given to those who were familiar with the English language. It is this preferential treatment given to English educated Indians that established English as the medium of instruction. The establishment of the Universities on the Western model and the holding of public examinations in which answers should be written in English completed the process. It was the happy accident of the birth of a large number of distinguished littérateurs who wrote in the native languages of India that ultimately saved these languages from being completely displaced by English. But for these great literary figures, the Indian languages would probably have been dead languages like Sanskrit. So far as the Bengali language was concerned, writers in this language helped to discover unprecedented elements of strength and beauty, of resilience and adaptability, in that language. But the job-value of English became a decisive factor. In those days, Indians who had received English education even corresponded with each other in English. Many of them began to dress in the European fashion, affected English manners, even changed their religion under the influence of European Christian missionaries. To be able to speak English fluently was regarded a hall-mark of culture.

Fifthly, the Government's officially declared policy was to favour higher education and not primary education. We may again quote Elphinstone who in his evidence before the House of Lords Committee in 1830 had stated : " I conceive it is more important to impart a high degree of education to the upper classes than to diffuse a much lower sort of it among the common people." The basis of the so-called " filtration theory " was laid in his observation that " If English could be at all diffused among persons who had the least time for reflection, the progress of knowledge, by means of it, would be accelerated in a ten-fold ratio since every man who made himself acquainted with a science through English would be able to communicate it in his own language to his countrymen." Soon English education came to be so much in demand that on the very first day that the Hugli College was opened (1836), there were as many as 1,200 applications for seats. The declaration of 1844 to the effect that for public appointments, preference would be given to those who had received English education strengthened this demand for such education far beyond its contemporary cultural value. There were even then strong pockets of resistance to English education among orthodox quarters but the growing economic value of such education tended to wear down the strength of the opposition.

Sixthly, the highlight of this period of the expansion of English education was the Education Despatch of Charles Wood to the Court of Directors of the East India Company in 1854. It has been described as the Magna Carta of English education in India. The Despatch enunciated the aim of education to be the diffusion of the Arts, Science, Philosophy and Literature of Europe. It was as a result of this Despatch that the move to establish Universities was initiated and the Departments of Public Instruction were reorganised. Apart from these recommendations, the Despatch made a welcome change in British educational policy in that it recommended that both the English language and the Indian languages were to be made the media for the diffusion of knowledge. Still another welcome change was the attention paid to primary education as well as the need for the training of teachers. A further change of great significance was that for the first time the principle of grants-in-aid for private institutions was accepted. The idea was to encourage private educational efforts wherever there was a local demand for it. In



fact, the long-term objective of the new policy was stated to be to leave education purely to private effort and even to hand over the Government institutions to non-official organizations. The aim appeared to be to secure a closer association of the public with Government policies in education as in other fields of administration.

It is to be noted that the original purpose of the establishment of Universities was to regulate the spread of higher education through the system of affiliation, examinations and the conferment of degrees and diplomas. Welcome as these changes were in the context of the times when these were made, the basic fact remained that all these changes were in fulfilment of the fundamental policy of imparting English education and English ideas in substitution of the native systems with the double object of creating an Indian counterpart of the British bureaucracy, to function as a sort of buffer between the Government and the people, and secondly, of creating an Indian intelligentsia, loyal to the ideals of European culture and to her intellectual and liberal traditions through which loyalty to the British Imperial throne could be ensured as the symbol and embodiment of all that is best in European society and through which Indians themselves would have a sense of participation, as a sort of reflected glory, in the broad streams of European history and civilization.

It would, perhaps, appear uncharitable to describe these changes as anti-people, for there is no doubt that English education and culture have opened the windows of India to the world and helped to modernise a medieval India, to rescue her from a growing obscurantism. All this may be conceded and India's debt to English education fully and freely acknowledged. At the same time, is it not a fact that the West Wind can be both a Preserver and Destroyer ? that it is not desirable that in our efforts to open our windows to the world outside we should tend to close those that open inward ? that in imbibing the values of Western culture and civilization the men and women of India should be uprooted from the basic values and traditions of Indian culture ? Or, if we have at all to rely on the testimony of the leaders of European thought as more authoritative than anything else, whom should an independent assessor turn to for a correct assessment of the judgment of history ?— Macaulay with his "single shelf of a good European library" or Tolstoy whose observation has been quoted at the head of this section ?

If John Dewey spoke of "traditional" education by way of contrasting it with "progressive" education, and described the former as one that is alien to the experience of the student and is imposed from without, how much more apposite will this description be in relation to the education foisted on India under alien direction ! There were, in particular, two directions in which the type of education introduced by British rulers made the greatest impact. One was the introduction of English not only as a compulsory subject from the school to the college but its use as the medium of instruction at all levels, beyond the primary stage, for both teaching and examination purposes. At first, the mother tongue was included as one of the subjects of study, but later it was discontinued. In fact, Indian vernaculars were accorded a very inferior position in the curriculum, if not removed from it altogether. At the higher stages, it was still more so. The other direction in which the system of education introduced in India produced an anti-people effect was its emphasis on liberal academic education. It was not till the 'forties of the last century that medical colleges based on Western systems were established in Calcutta, Madras and Bombay. About engineering education, it was not until 1846 that the Roorkee College was established as the result of the efforts of Mr. Thomason, the Lieutenant-Governor of the North Western Province (now the Uttar Pradesh) while, in Bengal, the first engineering institute was opened at the Writers' Buildings in 1856. Here also, the need was to turn out a number of trained engineers, overseers and technicians available for appointment in connection with the construction works that the Government had taken in hand. For example, the Roorkee College was established to supply engineers in connection with the construction of the Ganges Canal and the large workshops that had been erected at Roorkee.

By and large, the educational set-up of the country was geared to the needs of Government service. The preference was thus established for soft-collar jobs, whether at the office desk or the drawing office, which even now continues to be the bane of our system of education. Vocational or craft schools, or polytechnics, continued for a long time to be in disfavour. The decay and ruin of the cottage industries largely deprived the country of the only trade schools that we had had. The ultimate result was that the Indian artisans and



craftsmen, especially in the rural areas, who had lost their ancestral occupations under the impact of British rule which worked hand in hand with the European traders to flood our markets with cheap mass-produced articles were thrown back on land in increasing numbers. Indian enterprise which had once crossed the frontiers of India and had become the envy of the world was completely stifled. It was the familiar line of imperialist strategy in a colonial set-up.

III

Movement towards National Education

The Indian National Congress was established in 1885. Its educational platform does not appear to have developed any national ideology in the field of education until 1906 when it was confronted with the fourfold national programme of Self-government, National Education, *Swadeshi* and Boycott. The boycott of Government institutions and the setting up of "national" institutions figured once again in the Congress programmes during the Non-Co-operation Movement. The chief objective of the programme was not so much to develop national thinking on education as the negative one of paralysing the Government through the boycott movement. The boycott of educational institutions was possibly designed to bring out the students from their schools and colleges and enlist their services in the cause of the Non-Co-operation Movement. This line was, however, abandoned in 1924.

Apart from these sporadic efforts, which were bound to be of limited value except in their cumulative effect (along with the other items of boycott) on the psychology of protest against foreign domination, the approach of the Indian National Congress towards the educational set-up of the country was more or less pragmatic. It dealt with particular problems as they arose and these were diverse. When these expressions of views are added up (excluding the National Education Movement for the time being), Congress opinion seemed to favour :

(a) In the sphere of higher education—a democratic approach towards the constitution of University bodies, provision of longer

funds for such education, Indianisation of higher educational services, and establishment of teaching and residential Universities.

(b) In the sphere of secondary education—provision of larger funds with special encouragement for educationally backward classes, amendment of the rules relating to the maximum enrolment in a class, modification of the rules regarding the grants-in-aid, opposition to compulsory religious instruction and opposition to officialisation of secondary education.

(c) In the sphere of primary education—introduction of free and compulsory elementary education (with regret at the defeat of Gokhale's Elementary Education Bill).

(d) In the sphere of technical education—a demand for its expansion ; the Congress, from the very start, had been quite vocal in urging the establishment of a network of technical institutions and the spread of technical, industrial and vocational education. The Banaras Session (1905) of the Congress adopted a resolution for the establishment of at least one Polytechnic in the country. The technical institutes were to be started having regard to local conditions.

(e) General—The Government's adoption of early steps among other things, " to give effective voice to the leaders of Indian public opinion in shaping the policy and system of education in this country" (Congress, Calcutta, 1911).

There is no doubt that in making these recommendations, presented above in a highly summarised form, the Indian National Congress looked at the educational problems with an attitude of mending rather than ending the existing system of education. In other words, it did not produce an educational blue-print of its own to give a lead to the country excepting that it indicated its preference for teaching and residential Universities, urged the democratization of the educational bodies and the introduction of free and compulsory elementary education. It might be argued, however, that as India lacked the power to give effect to any such blue-print, it would have lacked reality and would have been, at best, an academic exercise, or a future projection. In fact, even when the Congress Ministries were placed in charge of the Departments of Education in the provinces after the Reforms of 1919, they did not take any steps to rationalise the existing system and introduce new ideas, presumably

because the limited resources placed at their disposal, as well as other impediments, did not permit them to undertake any large-scale experiments. Even in the sphere of University education during the entire period when Indian Ministers of Education functioned in the Provinces till Independence, that is, during the period 1922-47, only about 11 new Universities were established. Today, in independent India, during 1948-64, *i.e.*, in 16 years, as many as forty new Universities have been established, besides nine institutions deemed to be Universities under section 3 of the U.G.C. Act.

Nor was any worth-while attempt made in pre-Independence India in the direction of free and compulsory primary education. Most provinces undertook legislation during the period 1920-30. Bengal which had always taken a lead in educational matters, could not introduce primary education in the rural areas until 1930, when the Rural Primary Education Act was passed. It was provided that primary education was to be managed by District School Boards to be set up for the purpose. Funds would be provided out of the proceeds of a special cess on education together with grants from the Government. Actually, the total receipts fell far short of the estimated Rs. 200 lakhs required to make primary education compulsory in Bengal alone. Organizational deficiencies as well as other defects in the working of the Act also retarded the progress of primary education in the rural areas. The whole experiment bore the signature of incomplete thinking and still more incomplete planning. Taking India as a whole, the situation was no better. During the period 1920-44—nearly a quarter of a century—primary education could be introduced only in 2 per cent. of Indian villages. Even in the urban areas, the picture was no less depressing. In Bengal, compulsory primary education could be introduced only in two municipal towns, Chandpur and Chittagong, and in a few wards of the Calcutta Corporation.

A real push towards an integrated plan of national education was given in the report of the Central Advisory Board of Education, Government of India, on Post-War Development of Education (1944), popularly known as the Sargent Report. It was a comprehensive scheme of reconstruction. So far as the elementary stages of education were concerned, the scheme envisaged free education for children of the age-group 3-6 (pre-primary), age-group 6-11 (primary

or junior basic) and age-group 11-14 (Middle or Senior basic). The total cost was estimated at Rs. 32 crores for the Pre-Primary stage (10 lakhs of students), Rs. 114 crores for the primary students (360 lakhs) and Rs. 86 crores for Middle or Senior Basic students (150 lakhs), in all Rs. 232 crores. A portion of the primary school students would go over to the secondary schools at the age of 11 plus while the cost was estimated to be Rs. 50 crores for 72 lakhs of students. Education at the secondary stage need not be free. A break at the age of 11 (in some countries, 12) was regarded as educationally sound.

I do not wish to go into the details of the proposals at present except to point out that the Central Advisory Board's scheme which included learning through activity as provided in the Wardha scheme for the primary school students was a well-co-ordinated system but it could not be worked out presumably due to its relatively ambitious nature and financial difficulties. The result was that in 1950-51, only 43 per cent. of the children belonging to the age-group 6-11 were attending schools. Even now we are far from fulfilling the directive laid down in our Constitution. The problem of teachers, of wastage, and of providing a self-supporting base for education have not been fully tackled. It is relevant to repeat in this connection that the problem of education is not merely a question of statistical aggregates. Its national significance lies in its quality and its effectiveness. That significance was yet to be realised.

As long as India continued to be subject to British rule, a national system of education posed a negative protest as well as the problem of developing a parallel system of education independent of the Government. This was the double-plank of the National Education Movement which was born out of the *Swadeshi* agitation of 1906.

To explain the background of this agitation, I take the liberty of quoting the following extract from a history of the Indian National Congress compiled by D. Chakraborty and C. Bhattacharya ("The Congress in Evolution", 1885-1934) :

"In the following July, the Government announced that the Partition was to take effect from the 16th October, 1905. In a memorable public meeting in Calcutta on the 7th August there was inaugurated the *Swadeshi* and the Boycott movement to oppose the Partition. It was a sight for the Gods to see how on the memorable 16th of October, corresponding to the 30th Aswin, 1312 B.S., the whole Bengalee population, high and low, observed throughout the length and



breadth of the Province the *Rakhi* Day as a sign of preserving intact the United Bengal, despite the Government's partitioning. The volume of popular feeling the movement evoked and the proportions it assumed, were really unexpected and unprecedented in the annals of British India."

At the twenty-second session of the Congress held in Calcutta in 1906, the following resolution was unanimously adopted (re-affirmed at the Calcutta Congress of 1911) :

"In the opinion of this Congress, the time has arrived for the people all over the country earnestly to take up the question of National Education for both boys and girls and organise a system of Education—Literary, Scientific and Technical—suited to the requirements of the country, on national lines and under national control."

Referring to the upsurge that followed, Surendranath Banerjea, one of the high priests of the *Swadeshi* movement, referring to Lord Curzon, Viceroy of India and author of the Partition, spoke at the Banaras session of the Congress (1905), G. K. Gokhale presiding, as follows :

"He (Lord Curzon) has built better than he knew ; he has laid broad and deep the foundations of our national life ; he has stimulated those forces which contribute to up-building the nations ; he has made us a nation ; and the most reactionary of the Indian Viceroys will go down to posterity as the architect of the Indian national life."

The move for national education was part of a general boycott decision adopted by the Benares Congress : boycott of British goods, accompanied by a demand for self-government and a recommendation for the use of *Swadeshi* (indigenous) products. The whole atmosphere in the country was, as it were, electrically charged. The nation, as it were, was re-born on the 16th October, 1905. It is necessary to add that the constructive side of the National Education Movement received powerful support from unexpected quarters. It brought over Aurobindo Ghose from Baroda where he left a lucrative job to accept the principalship of the National College. It brought out Poet Rabindranath from his seclusion into the vortex of the national movement. Sedate and sober men like Gooroodas Banerjee and Rashbehary Ghosh joined the National Council of Education. Tagore himself ceaselessly campaigned for the idea. He even set model question papers. "English education has been our defeat", said

Rabindranath in one of his speeches on "Jatiya Vidyālaya" (The National School). Let the National School, he said, bring us out of the charmed circle of learning by rote and infuse a spirit of free enquiry and noble courage in our minds now tied to a foreign yoke. Let the students not merely pick up knowledge. Let them, through devotion, through inner strength, have the power to realise themselves with freedom from fear.

Unfortunately this zeal did not last long. It came on the crest of a national upheaval and petered out as soon as the political motivation ceased to operate. It was the product of a passionate outburst and, like a sudden flash of lightning, it illuminated the horizon with an almost blinding light and it soon disappeared into the void of darkness. However, as long as this frenzy lasted, it produced certain remarkable results. National Schools sprang up throughout the country. A National University was established. So was a National Medical College. Vidyāpiths were established at Kashi (Banaras), Gujarat, Patna. The Jamia Millia Islamia, a national university for the Muslims, was established at Aligarh, since removed to Delhi. Some of these institutions are still alive today of which the most prominent is the Jadavpur College of Engineering and Technology, now converted into a full-fledged University. A chronicler says that the institutions which disappeared or became moribund in the course of a few years were situated mostly in those areas where the people depended largely on Government service or other jobs which required a certificate of pass, a degree or diploma of a recognised University or such other institutions ; while those that survived were located in areas where the people were engaged in business and commerce and were not, therefore, in any pressing need of academic certificates. The survival of the College at Jadavpur and certain other institutions elsewhere was mainly due to the fact that they filled a vacuum or were fulfilling special needs.

Should we then say, in retrospect, that the movement towards national education which formed one of the four planks of the nationalist platform during the Swadeshi agitation must be considered, by and large, to have failed ? The immediate answer will probably be in the affirmative. The movement failed because its political motivation failed to spell out in clear terms the ideology and the institutional set-up of what passed as "national education". Poet



Tagore, no doubt, tried to lay down what might be regarded as the mood, if not the philosophy, of national education. What was national about it was that it was expressed in a language of protest against the enslavement of mind that British domination had brought about. A national system of education, properly so called, requires something more than national enthusiasm. It must be based on a proper assessment of national needs, of an agreed system of priorities, on the availability of adequate resources, material as well as human, and the final pattern of education in its successive stages, conforming to the national aim. Its national ethos will derive from the success it achieves in bringing about the national integration of the diverse elements of the Indian national complex, to bring them together in a real University of minds while retaining the multiverse character of Indian culture. Such an education will fail if it does not produce in our young people not only the spirit of free enquiry but also the spirit of free enterprise, fit them for the role of constructive citizenship, qualify them in the different fields of national endeavour with an educational system that should not only have a national orientation but be broad-based to suit every distinct type of need. Finally, national education must not only be *national*; it must, in the fullest sense, be *education*. It should achieve the integration of the human personality for which the different stages of the educational system should be properly integrated and adjusted. These are the obvious essentials of any *sound* educational system though, as we shall see later on, there are important variations in emphasis as well as structure in the national systems of education in different countries in conformity with national needs and outlook. There is no doubt that it would be unrealistic to try to put through any such national programme in a country that is under foreign domination. The main reason for the failure of the movement for national education in India during the Swadeshi agitation was that the country lacked the power and the resources to put through such a programme, even apart from the fact that the scheme lacked a carefully drawn up blue-print. Public support was also hesitant, as well as uncertain and inadequate. Finally, the high-priests of the National Education Movement made a mistake in not only bypassing the edifice of education that had been built up in Bengal (and elsewhere) largely through non-official efforts but in trying to

build up a parallel system on the basis mainly of an emotional up-surge.

Naturally, a scheme of national education had to wait till India attained freedom. What was immediately required after India became free was to secure a national consensus as to the nature, the aims and objects, and the programmes of national education acceptable to the country. Some of the best minds of India are now giving their attention to this problem. The Education (Kothari) Commission, too, have made their recommendations. Finally, the framers of our Economic Plans have set the context in which our educational system must, of necessity, function. Let us now turn to a study of these efforts.

IV

The Concept of National Education Analysed

A scheme of National Education must be based on two premises. It must, in the first place, help to build up a national identity instead of being an article imported wholesale from the West and anti-people in its consequences. The second premise is that it must cover every aspect of the needs and requirements of the nation for a complete and sound system of education.

(a) What is National Education ?

A Seminar convened jointly by the University of Bombay and the Indian Committee of Cultural Freedom (June 25-28, 1964) has provided us with certain lines of thinking in the direction of a national system of education. A. B. Shah, Secretary of the Seminar, thus defined the concept of a national system of education. In the first place, according to him, since India is committed to freedom, her educational system "has to be consciously geared to the need of strengthening the liberal strands in her mixed tradition". It is to be noticed that Shah was unequivocally in favour of the new tradition introduced by the British rulers, which "is liberal and secular, attuned



to the spirit of the age, and capable of supporting as well as drawing sustenance from the forces released by freedom and the urge for a better life". This tradition, he explains, "may with reasonable confidence be expected to triumph over the older tradition and modernise Indian thought and behaviour patterns in all essential respects in the course of time". A national system of education, according to Shah, should have cultural autonomy with the role of the Government reduced to that of an "operational critic of educational institutions". In its economic aspect a national system of education would imply a more conscious planning of educational expansion and should be in "close liaison with the agencies responsible for economic development". At present, education enjoys a rather low priority in our economic plans which suggests a lack of appreciation of the role of education in promoting economic growth. Socially, a national system of education will have to meet the problem posed by the absence of a strong enough will on the part of its constituent groups to live together as members of a modern, secular democracy. The creation of such a will as well as the discovery of institutional forms for its expression is to be a further task of our educational system.

It is evident that a national system of education should be concerned with, and based upon, a proper study of the lines of approach underlying our existing system of education as well as a clear conception of the ultimate as well as current or topical objectives of a national system.

(b) A Question of Approach

On the question of approach, J. P. Naik, another distinguished participant of the Seminar, thought that our educational plans were working on the following lines : (1) comprehensive approach, which means that "we have tried" to do something of everything, (2) emphasis on expansion and (3) comparative neglect of quality. It is Naik's contention that our attempt to do something of everything is due to pressure from different sources. It is also actuated by the attempt to provide equal opportunities for all sections of the people, particularly the less advanced or less privileged sec-



tions including women, displaced persons, scheduled and backward classes and so on. In particular, the constitutional directive for free and compulsory education for children belonging to the age-group (6-14) has led to "an unprecedented expansion of elementary education", creating pressures from below which are affecting secondary and higher stages of education also. As a result, new institutions are being opened without adequate (or even any) regard to the essential facilities needed for a minimum standard of education. The failure in respect of quality follows as a consequence. The chief failure, as Naik rightly points out, is the failure to identify and promote essential sectors which require comparatively little investment but have a large effect on quality. While there is room for difference on his plea for a larger outlay on State Education Departments as "a major programme of qualitative improvement", there will be general agreement on his plea for improving class-room techniques, revision of curricula, preparation of better text books and the like which can be undertaken without too great a strain on the country's financial resources. Teacher training, especially pre-service and in-service training, is also a field where qualitative improvement may be effected without too great an outlay.

(c) Objectives

So far as the objectives of a national system of education is concerned, we can consider the question from what may be described as objectives in perspective and objectives that are immediately in view. The former may also be called long-term objectives.

The perspective of all education is set by the need for the all-round and harmonious development of the powers, physical, mental, intellectual and spiritual, of man ; in short, the balanced development of human personality. A nation stands or falls by the quality of its citizens. There are, from this point of view, certain absolute values in education which fix the goal of our efforts and lend purpose to our activity. There is always the possibility of conflict between the ultimate or absolute aims and those rooted in present activities. It is argued, by Dewey, for example, that ultimate aims are in the nature of externally supplied objectives to which our activities are to be geared. They limit intelligence because, given ready-made,



they must be imposed by some authority external to intelligence, leaving to the latter nothing but a mechanical choice of means. He, therefore, argues that all aims must be an outgrowth of existing conditions. Applied to the field of education, it means that our objectives should be contemporaneous with current and local circumstances ; they should be topical. It is difficult to accept this proposition without qualifications. To take a contemporary issue : what should be the objectives of a society in which blackmarketing flourishes ? Is it to improve the technique of blackmarketing so that it can be made more efficient and more extensive ? Or, if you say that the problem posed by blackmarketing is to induce an attitude that would make blackmarketing more difficult, if not to eliminate it altogether, then it might be possible to argue that the attitude conceals an allegiance to certain absolute values. Honesty, love of truth, expansion of the field of inter-human co-operation, the desire for peace —all these are absolute values in the sense that they are valid under all circumstances and in all situations. Gandhiji's love for truth and non-violence, for *ahimsa*, was absolute in a similar sense. Regard for such values is not necessarily an externally imposed force, or idea " borrowed from standard text-books". They provide, during periods of crisis, the sheet-anchor of spiritual stability, the most powerful motivations for human civilization and progress. This also explains the insistence on the inclusion of Humanities in the curriculum of science students. We also recall that Gandhiji recommended the Wardha type of schools, not merely as a means of mass education but also because it was based on non-violence. In fact, it should not be the purpose of education to produce carbon copies of English, German or American prototypes but to produce Indians who, while assimilating all that is best in Western culture, will still remain essentially Indian with a national identity. If we are cut off from our cultural traditions, we become like a rudderless ship cast adrift on the sea. De-Indianization cannot certainly be the long-term objective of a national system of education.

In framing a national educational policy, we must not only keep in mind the long-term objectives of such a policy but also have a view of what J. P. Naik has called " topical objectives ". These objectives are related to the immediate or topical problems that have arisen, or are likely to arise, say, during the next few years, affecting our

educational policies and programmes. One such problem that has lately arisen is that of national emotional integration and how far education can help to achieve it. Another problem is the development of values, attitudes and habits that are favourable to the stabilisation of democracy which we have adopted as a way of life. Still another problem is set by the implications of secular education. Then comes the question of the conflict of values, ancient and modern, and the need for their reconciliation ; and, finally, of the development of a social outlook through education. The problem of relating education to economic growth, as well as to orientate it towards increased productivity, is also another topical problem that requires immediate attention in the context of the Five-Year Plans.

Considerations of space do not justify a detailed examination of each of these issues, some of which are, indeed, basic to the present situation. We do need clarification and the intelligent handling of these issues. There is, for instance, the issue of the medium of instruction. Another issue is that of religious and moral instruction, already referred to. The general issue of student indiscipline has also assumed the proportions of a national problem. All this means that we should be very careful in defining and identifying the issues in their correct perspective without being slaves to slogans. Further, the great issues of education are well worth study, not merely on their merits, but in relation to the nation's short-term as well as long-term interests. From this point of view alone, not to speak of other reasons, India requires a "perspective plan" of educational development, that is to say, a national perspective. At the same time, the needs of modern India will have to be reconciled with the basic traditions and ideals of Indian society. This implies that the searchlight of logic and reason has to be focussed on the re-evaluation of our ancient or traditional ideals.

(d) Students, Teachers and Administrators

Students, Teachers and Administrators—each one of these groups have to play their part in the discovery of a new national ethos. If the system of education is to inculcate in their minds a sense of obligation to the nation, our students and teachers must be given a fair deal in the society that is in the making. Students deserve a

fair deal not merely from the point of view of a greater understanding of their manifold problems but the provision of at least the minimum requisites of a sound educational programme. These include good libraries, particularly text-book libraries, well-equipped laboratories with research facilities for advanced students, proper study-rooms (or at least study-space), cheap and convenient transport arrangements (if suitable residential accommodation cannot be provided within or near the college or school campus), free tiffin for school students and subsidised food for others, gymnasia and play-grounds, and, above all, employment opportunities on completion of education. Extra-curricular activities should provide for a properly supervised system of student government in Colleges as well as Universities, debating societies including speech contests, dramatics, regular athletic meets, seminars, activity programmes including social welfare activities, health homes, excursions of the "know-your-country" type including contacts with rural areas, summer schools and refresher courses and so on. So far as the teachers are concerned, they, of all persons, should not be treated as "also rans" in the race for a higher and better standard of life. At present, we are, in this respect, suffering from a serious distortion of values. A National Professor in India draws a remuneration less than the pay drawn by a newly-appointed Joint Secretary to the Government. A primary teacher, at the other extreme, draws pay that compares unfavourably with that of a class IV employee (peons or bearers) of a good mercantile office or in the offices of the Government itself. It is a distressing fact that our teachers are underpaid and over-worked, barring a few who are in the seniormost grades of the Government educational services. It is also true that, as a consequence, many of the teachers are led to indulge in unprofessional practices that are not conducive to the best interests of education.

The Education Commission, however, points out that the teachers as a class in India were better off in 1965-66 than they were in 1950-51. During this period, the average earnings of all teachers taken together rose by 92 per cent while the cost of living for working classes rose by 65 per cent. Taking each class of teachers separately, the figures show a rise of emoluments of 73 per cent in the case of University teachers and 80 per cent in the case of lower primary teachers during 1950-65. Teachers in professional colleges have

almost maintained the *status quo* relative to the cost of living as their emoluments increased by 62 per cent during this period. In the case of the secondary school teachers and teachers of colleges of arts and science, however, the emoluments have lagged behind the cost of living index. In the former case, the percentage increase in emoluments was 56 and in the latter (college teachers) it was 48. Teachers of the pre-primary schools have been hardest hit (18 per cent). These figures appear to suggest that in real terms the college teachers, secondary school teachers and pre-primary teachers were distinctly worse off in 1965-66 than in 1950-51. But teachers as a whole improved their relative position.

The Education Commission also produces the significant fact that during the period 1950-51 to 1965-66, the *per capita* national income (at current prices) rose by 59 per cent. Having regard to this fact and the figures quoted above, it may be suggested that the percentage lag between emoluments of teachers who have suffered in real terms and the cost of living index is not so large as to justify a desperate view of the situation. But this conclusion would not be justified because of two reasons. In the first place, the figures quoted above relate to the *changes* that took place during the 15 years under review. The position as it was in the basic year (1950-51) should be examined, compared to, say, the pre-War year 1939. Then only a correct view of the teacher's emoluments in real terms in the post-War as well as post-Independence period would be obtained. It is also a matter of grave concern that the emoluments of a teacher compare very unfavourably with those of others of comparable qualifications employed in administrative services. Finally, the Commission itself has pointed out that the improvement in emoluments *vis-a-vis* the cost of living index was noticeable more or less up to 1960-61. Since then it has been "almost completely neutralised by the sharp increase in prices that has taken place in the last two or three years". The scales of pay recommended by the Commission are an acknowledgment not only of the financial straits to which teachers have been reduced but also of the important role they would be required to play, with honour and dignity, in implementing a national scheme of education.

Finally, we come to the educational administrators. It is one of the merits of bureaucracy that it contributes its special knowledge,

skill and experience to the policy-framing and decision-making business of Government. It is, perhaps, relevant in this connection to distinguish between the two wings of the administrative set-up, the Secretariat and the Directorate. Now, very few of the officers in the Education Secretariat have any opportunities of gathering direct experience of the changing perspectives of academic life, standards, or temper. The assistants also are in a similar position. Their temper is administrative rather than academic. The case is somewhat different in the Directorates. Many of the officers of the Education Directorate are recruited from among teachers. Normally, they would be expected to show a greater appreciation of the problems affecting our teachers and students, or of the institutions concerned. But even they are not altogether free of the malady that plagues the administrative services. The malady, in fact, is two-fold. In the first place, the teacher-administrator soon finds himself overwhelmed by the gravitational pull of the administrator. Secondly, he, along with his brother officers in the Secretariat, has to work within the straight-jacket of financial and departmental rules. Most of their time is taken up with statistics, financial sanctions, grants-in-aid, transfers, promotions and appointments and administrative routine. The result is that when administrative exigencies impinge on academic interests, it is the former that prevail. If a national system of education is to develop, it is necessary that the Education Ministry, together with the Secretariat and the Directorate, should be composed largely of personnel with sufficient academic experience, at any rate with a good academic, if not scholastic, background, and the rules should provide for the occasional interchange of academic and administrative personnel. Any scope for the relaxation of red-tape should be under constant review. It would also pay in the long run if the financial straight-jacket is made a little less rigid in the sphere of education, teaching and research. It would also be helpful if the Finance Department is assisted in this matter by an Educational Consultant.

V

A National University ?

It is evident that in 1906, the idea of a national system of education, or of a National University, came before its time. Today,



after more than 50 years of that movement, the idea has cropped up again, though in a different context.

Today, the context is that of national integration. Since independence two or three things have happened which have lent some urgency to the issue of a Central or National University or Universities. One is the break-up of India into linguistic States. The other is the adoption of Hindi as the 'official' language of the Indian Union with a view, presumably, to its ultimate recognition as the national language. The greater mobility of the population due to the social and economic changes brought about by our fifteen years of planning—a process that is likely to be further accelerated during the next 15 years, with an added impetus when the present drive for making education up to the age of 14 compulsory begins to bear fruit, awakening new conceits and ambitions in areas where they have been so long dormant—is yet another factor that underscores the need for a centrally planned scheme of education as an academic as well as an administrative necessity.

(a) *The Bombay Seminar (1962)*

The Bombay Seminar on a National University (September 28-30, 1962) held under the auspices of the Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom which was inaugurated by C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyar was seized of this problem. Apart from some very interesting papers contributed to this Seminar, the issues for discussion were broadly framed under these three heads, *viz.*, The University in a Developing Society, the Regionalisation of the University, and a National University.

On each of these issues opinion was sharply divided. As regards a National University, opinion varied from one extreme to the other. One view was in favour of an *international* University in India with English as the medium of instruction which would attract students from all over the world as Oxford, Cambridge, Harvard, Paris and other international universities do or as our own Taxila and Nālandā did in the past. There were others who believed that it might make a very limited impact. It was even suggested that the proposal for an international University implied that there was not a single "University" in India, in the real sense of the term. Many of the expo-



nents of the National University idea have begun to equate it with one that used English as the medium of instruction. Even the question of national integration was pushed to the background by some speakers on the ground that it could not be the primary aim of a University but a "by-product of the search for truth and pursuit of knowledge". Ultimately, the Seminar concluded the session with the following authorised statement :

"The Seminar examined the proposal for the establishment of an International University in India. If it enjoys complete autonomy and adequate public support, such a University would establish international standards of scholarship and research. It will also enable India to retain and attract the best academic talent by providing to it conditions in which it can find creative self-fulfilment. Besides, it will be possible to introduce in it modern syllabi and educational methods, which is extremely difficult to initiate in the existing Universities as they suffer from a number of organizational difficulties and from the need to cater to large numbers. The International University will be the standard-bearer of University education and will provide a constant challenge to other Indian Universities for continued improvement of their own standards."

This proposal, was coupled with another that some of the Universities in India might be enabled to preserve their "all-India cosmopolitan character" by retaining in them English as the sole medium of instruction and that under every other University there should be some College or Colleges which would continue to teach through English even if elsewhere in the University the regional language was the medium of instruction. As regards the use of the regional language as the medium, the Seminar viewed it with "concern" and declared : "This policy threatens the national character of our Universities. It will fragment the intellectual elite, convert the Universities from universal into parochial institutions, and will render impossible the migration and exchange of students and teachers from one part of the country to another".

(b) The Kothari Commission's Report

The Education (Kothari) Commission which was also seised of the problem recognised the need for the type of University discussed at the Bombay Seminar. But instead of recommending that there should be a new University of international standards, the Com-

mission proposed that five or six of what may be called "Major Universities" in India should be so developed as to provide the requisite conditions, both as to staff and students, as well as to the necessary equipment and atmosphere, to make first class post-graduate work and research possible. "The standards of these Major Universities", it said, "should be comparable to the best institutions of their type in any part of the world so that really gifted and promising students need not normally have to go abroad for receiving post-graduate or research training."¹ While the establishment of a new "international" University presents problems of a practical nature, the Commission is of the view that its own proposal for developing half a dozen Major Universities (which, be it noted, should include one of the I.I.T.'s and one Agricultural University) in India to the status comparable to that of "the best institutions of their type in any part of the world" is "definitely practicable and should be taken up as a matter of high priority".

I am not sure if the Kothari Commission's proposal for the upgrading of a number of Indian Universities is an improvement on the proposal for a National University. The advantages, as claimed by the Commission, following from the development of the Major Universities are also those that would accrue from the acceptance of the Bombay Seminar's proposal. For the information of the reader, the relevant extract from the Commission's Report is reproduced below :

"There would be several advantages in creating such universities. In the first place, they would make their existence felt by their research and by the high standards of training which they would provide for their students. They would also supply a goodly portion of the outstanding personnel needed for the staffs of universities, colleges and other institutions of higher education. In this way, their graduates may be expected to infuse into them the standards acquired in their own universities and to spread the ethos of genuine intellectual activity and devotion into the institutions where they are employed. It is unfortunate that at present there are hardly any such universities in the country which perform this vital and catalytic role in the Indian academic world."²

Another advantage, according to the Commission, would be that if the proposal is accepted, it would be possible to provide, within

¹ Report of the Education Commission (1964-66), pp. 279-282.

² *Ibid*, p. 280.



the country itself, first-rate post-graduate education comparable to that in educationally advanced nations. The scholars and scientists trained in these universities "will feel much more akin to their own centres of creativity". And further—

"The importance assigned to foreign degrees, whether they are of the high, or average or poor quality, will be considerably diminished and those who have not 'returned' from abroad would not feel at a disadvantage. We realise that it will still be necessary for Indian scientists and scholars to go abroad for purposes of further training, research or for consultation with their foreign colleagues....But instead of going abroad to receive first-rate post-graduate education, study abroad will primarily aim at bringing first class Indian scholars to work with distinguished scholars of international reputation."

Nor is the Commission convinced that there is at present any fruitful intercommunication of a high standard between foreign savants and Indian scholars studying abroad. "There is a great deal of difference," the Commission declares, "between participation in the world intellectual community simply from the periphery, as a reproducer or marginal contributor to what has been discovered or invented elsewhere, and participating as an equal in a process of creating, giving and receiving. We should try for the latter position."

Now, all these arguments in favour of the Commission's proposal apply *mutatis mutandis* to the proposal for a National, or even an International, University, with this difference that the latter is supposed to be a separate University, keeping in tact the existing Universities in India. The Commission's proposal for upgrading some of the existing Universities in this country as well as the elaborate justification given for the same deserves serious consideration at the hands of our educationists as well as legislators. It is, however, possible to anticipate some of the objections to the scheme. The argument that the acceptance of the Commission's proposal would amount to the institution of a system of "elite education" has been ably countered by the Commission itself. There is, as its report states, always need for elite institutions in every academic system. England boasts of her Oxford and Cambridge, the United States of her Harvard and Columbia, France of her Sorbone. Every country has to build up its intellectual leadership and it is the duty and privilege of the State to create the necessary conditions for the same. It is also

likely that if the Commission's proposal is accepted, the favoured universities will certainly welcome the elevation in their status. The objection that we may anticipate is the practical difficulties to be encountered in the process of upgrading. What would happen to the existing faculties? What would be their relation to the new members of the staff—the elite staff, so to speak—who would be specially recruited in terms of the proposal? Presumably there would be differential pay-scales and other benefits such as a lower teaching load, more extensive research and library facilities, elastic time tables *et cetera*. No doubt, the more distinguished of the existing teachers would be taken over to the new cadre. Without doubt, also, new teachers or scholars of outstanding qualifications or reputation would be welcome in such a set-up. Difficulties would arise involving the residual staff. They would presumably be relegated to an inferior position. This would lower them in the estimation of the students. On the other hand, students might also feel that some of their teachers have been shabbily dealt with, particularly if any of the teachers lost his job because of the re-shuffle. A new kind of frustration would arise out of the resulting discontent and resentment. If there were vacancies in the existing cadres, the infusion of new blood would be easier. Otherwise, the universities concerned would have to carry a superfluous staff labelled "not-so-good". In any case what would be the criteria of judging whether a teacher is up to the mark? Who would judge it?—the head of the department? or would the teachers—some of them with fairly long records of service—have to appear before a Selection Board or the Public Service Commission?

(c) *A Third Proposal*

All things considered, it would be desirable to consider the establishment of a National or All-India University *de novo*. One great advantage of such a project would be the absence of the problem of vested interests. It would start with a clean slate. It would be free to organise its faculties on modern up-to-date lines, incorporating the latest ideas in the several fields of specialisation. There would be no recurrent or gravitational pull due to the existence of a large mass of mediocrity or of disgruntled faculty members. Such a Uni-



versity, further, could be selective in admitting students. Lastly, there would be the question of the medium of instruction. Until we could boast of an accepted national language which would be able to hold its own as a leading language of the world, the medium of instruction must of necessity be English, at least for the time being, in such a University. As most of the existing State Universities will sooner or later switch over to the mother-tongue or the regional language as the medium of instruction from the lowest to the highest stages of education, the acceptance of the Kothari Commission's proposal will prove doubly difficult.

It is clear that a National University created *de novo* would present problems of finance and organisation. It is for this reason that I have spoken of a National University rather than a group of such universities. Such a University should preferably be located at the centre, that is, Delhi, but it would have the power of establishing and/or affiliating regional colleges. The organisation of these Colleges should be uniform. The curricular offerings should also be more or less identical, except where regional requirements might necessitate modifications, so as to facilitate the mobility of students as well as staff from one college to another. Such a University with its affiliates would be enabled to play a really national role for it would be cosmopolitan in its composition and catholic—or shall we say, international—in its outlook. Narrow chauvinism which today is a menace to the peace and prosperity of the world would find no ally in such a set-up. But still, if the general public, especially the intelligentsia, show themselves to be resistant to the idea of a National University, it should be, in my judgment, prudent to suspend the whole idea of such a University until a more propitious time. That need not mean that the country would be rejecting the ideal of national integration in favour of parochialism. Nor is it a vote against the proposal for creating a real, intellectual elite, not necessarily of the drawing room variety, who would stand as an effective bar against all forms of bigotry and narrow sectarian or group interest and who would lead a relentless fight against such anti-national forces as casteism, communalism and parochialism. After all, the effectiveness of a University as a catalytic agent in this respect may be exaggerated. The vices of casteism, communalism and parochialism must primarily be fought on the social and political plane. So far as the Univer-



sities are concerned, the development of a few of them into major universities would not, by itself, lead to a crusade against the national ills that afflict the country. It could undoubtedly provide an intellectual and critical leadership which, to be effective, must be in a position to seek and get the support of other educated classes to get things changed. The trouble with our existing universities is that they have really failed to create an "intellectual community", to quote a phrase used by Edward Shils. Such of the intellectuals as we come across are, as Eric Ashby (quoted by the Kothari Commission) observed, culturally displaced persons, devoid of the warmth and fellowship of academic society. It is necessary, in fact, urgent, that we should restore to our Universities at least a minimum fund of zeal and enthusiasm, instead of an anaemic "who-cares" attitude. Most of our Universities are suffering from the pressure of adverse circumstances. Politically they are suspects, which explains why the Government, both at the Centre and the States, is forging fresh tools of control over University affairs. Lack of finance is a source of great worry to almost all our Universities and has successfully inhibited all desire for improvement and expansion. Undesirable political activities—undesirable from the academic point of view and that of institutional discipline—involving both teachers and students—have left the Universities little time to work in peace or for creative thinking. Standards are crumbling down like nine pins. Examinations are fast becoming a farce. It is time that the attention of Indian leaders is directed to the urgent discovery of a solution of the mess in which the Universities of India find themselves today, instead of training their sights on distant or abstract ideals. This is not to be interpreted as opposing the idea of central or national or major universities. It is a caveat, lest the case of our existing Universities should go by default.



CHAPTER III

INDIAN IDEALS OF EDUCATION (ANCIENT INDIA)

I

A Way of Life

Ancient India had expressed herself clearly and emphatically on the ideals of education. These ideals were part of a well-ordered social life reflected in the *Varnāśrama* concept. Education had a deeply religious basis. The world of matter or of material experiences was not neglected but the ultimate aim or objective was to initiate the student into a higher life. For this he was required to pass through several stages, the highest stage being that of renunciation when, after discharging his obligations to his family and society, he left the material cares of the world to enter upon a life of meditation. The very first of these stages was the stage of study and discipline. The young student, after his initiation, had to live-in which his preceptor and family, in daily communion, in the quietude of the *āśrama*, the forest hermitage of the teacher, away from the din and bustle of city life, in pleasant but austere surroundings, until he was intellectually weaned. Even royal princes for their education had to leave their palaces to stay with the *Guru* (preceptor). When the disciple completed his education, he would go back to the life of a *Gṛhi*, a householder, and raise a family, with the blessings of his teacher. These blessings, indeed, were something more than mere blessings. They committed him to a way of life.

For that matter, education in every country points to a way of life. In a changing world, the way of life also changes. We cannot imagine that the way of life appropriate to an atomic age would be the same as that which marked the age of the bullock cart or the stage coach. It would not be the same in a society in which men and women go out to work in offices and factories, and to prepare themselves for such occupations, as it would be when Adam delved and Eve span. So also we have travelled far from the way of life

that our ancestors had a few centuries ago and of which their educational system was an expression. The school building has replaced the *āśrama*, and the stipendiary teacher does duty for the *guru*. The type of education together with its aims and objectives has also changed to suit modern requirements, the requirements of a scientific, industrial and commercial age. In fact, the whole basis of values has changed. The teacher, whose word was once law, now occupies almost the bottom rung of society. He is now a "low-priority" item. The *Vaiśya*, using the word in its ancient sense, has now become the pace-setter. We still have Brahmins by birth. We have lost—or almost lost—the Brahmins by character, by occupation. The search after Truth has yielded to the craze after Affluence.

Why, then, hark back to ancient ideals? If for nothing else, let us know at least what they were. Does not an ancient family boast of its heraldry? Let the posterity have at least the knowledge of what their ancestors were like, what they thought, what values they upheld, how they educated themselves. We may then, perhaps, ask why, for instance, did they attain such pre-eminence in thought and wisdom when Europe was still primitive? Why does the world of intellectual elite still admire the wisdom stored in the Sacred Books of the East? The most significant characteristic of the modern age is the critical spirit; it does not take anything on trust. Let us, by all means, throw the searchlight of criticism on what our ancient saints—men who had devoted a life time to the search for and the discovery of great Truths—said and did; but let us recognise wisdom if we find it. The *Bhāgavad Gītā* still moves millions of men, not all of them idiots and misfits. So do the Bible and the *Quran*, the *Talmud* and the *Zend-Avesta*. They are still part of our contemporary literature as they were hundreds of years ago.

Our ignorance of the vast treasure-house of knowledge and wisdom that ancient India provided registers the first defect of our educational system. This knowledge does not form part of our normal school and college curriculum. One difficulty is that one has to have access to this knowledge through the Sanskrit language. There are no authorised translations of our scriptures available in an easily understandable and readable form which could be included as a compulsory subject of study in our school curriculum. It should be



possible to introduce a daily prayer system in which selected *slokas*, in their original form, or with suitable translations, could be used as texts. Sanskrit is a sweet and graceful language. Its very sound, its cadence, its depth and resonance, when properly recited, is itself an elevating experience and so I would prefer the original *slokas* to be recited before the translations are given. But this is by the way. The main difficulty is that any one who wants to know anything about the Vedic or the Pourāṇic age by reference to source materials has to work through a mass of fairly difficult Sanskritic literature or to depend upon secondary sources.¹ To understand the Vedas and the Vedāṅgas would require special guidance and many years of patient study. At Nālandā, for instance, students had to spend as many as twelve years studying the Vedas and the Upanishads, the works of Mahāyana Buddhism and Jainism, systems of philosophy and logic. In ancient India, study of the Vedas was a "must" for every student. It was part of their fundamental education, together with the pursuit of more materialistic studies.

Now, these studies, in the well-ordered and regulated social life of ancient India, conformed to the scale of values accepted by that society and, at the same time, accorded with the experiences with which the learner was familiar or which he would normally expect as he would step out of the *āśrama* to enter the larger society. That was the way of life with which he was familiar and which he was expected to sustain. So he was trained in certain traditions and to respect certain values. Society, and his life in it, were equally adjusted to these values and traditions. Some of the modern problems of education were practically unknown. There was no examination system as we know it now. There was hardly any room for indiscipline. There was no question of rights, for the emphasis throughout was on duties.

I have already quoted Dewey² to show how 'new' or progressive education insists on education through experience. The right type of education depends on the right choice of experiences. These experiences should not only accord with the present but will help

¹ Both these methods have been followed in this Chapter. The interpretations, unless otherwise stated, are the author's own.

² Chapter I.



the child to face future experiences. A system of education adjusted to a particular set of experiences and/or normal expectations of the same as the child grows up, would be out of focus under circumstances postulating a totally different set of experiences. Under such conditions, the utility of studying the educational system of an age long past can derive from two factors. In the first place, it enables us to make a comparative estimate of values, even to the extent of comparing our own way of life with that of our ancient ancestors so as to discover the points, and appreciate the rationale, of deviation and judge the same. This leads to the second point, namely, as already suggested earlier, that there are certain truths which defy the frontiers of time and space. They are the living truths, for they form the basic Religion of Man. And, in any case, to pass an *ex parte* judgment on the Past is not juristically fair. The Past must tender its evidence and the judge must have the capacity of impartial evaluation. Education, in whatever form and in whatever country or age it is practised, is a subject of perennial interest. One needs no further apology for a look at our ancient ideals of education. It will appear that our predecessors were not so outdated as some of us, in our ignorance, may think and that they can still teach a thing or two to the present confused generation.

II

"Parā-Vidyā" and "Aparā Vidyā"

Ever since the dawn of civilization, learned men in our own country as well as in other countries, have reflected on the nature and content of education. The *Upanishads* divide all knowledge into two broad divisions, *Parā-Vidyā* and *Aparā-Vidyā*. *Parā-Vidyā* is the highest expression of *Vidyā* for it is the knowledge through which the Ultimate Reality is known, while *Aparā-Vidyā* is subsidiary knowledge and is held to include study of the four *Vedas* and the six *Vedāngas*, besides other branches of useful knowledge such as Phonetics, Ritiualistic knowledge, Grammar, Astronomy etc. The high value of education is also shown by the fact that in the *īśa-Upanishad*, only *Parā-Vidyā* is called *Vidyā*, while *Aparā-Vidyā* is called *Avidyā*. It is the eternal quest after the Absolute which attracted ancient



Aryans and the whole of the education system was oriented towards that end. That did not mean that the more material aspects of education were neglected by our ancient Sages. This was seen in the remarkable development of such sciences as archery (*Dhanur-veda*), medicine (*Āyurveda*), and sexual science, (*Kāmasutra*) and also in the elaborate education planned for the Princes. There was the story that the sage Nārada would not accept Sanat Kumāra as his disciple until he had mastered nineteen secular subjects. In other words, secular knowledge was considered to be a pre-requisite for the attainment of the highest spiritual truths. *Para-Vidyā* and *Aparā-Vidyā* together constituted a comprehensive system of attaining knowledge and perfection. Such education must satisfy all elements in men's nature, and help to build up the harmonious and integrated personality of man.³

Our ancients not only set down the goal of education and indicated the stages by which the same was to be attained ; they also elaborated the basic methods and conditions of the system. Thus, *Āṅga* (or the limbs of the body), *Vak* (speech), *Prīṇa* (vitality), *Cakshus* (eyes), *Srotra* (ears), *Vala* (strength) and the *Indriyas* (other organs of the body) must be perfected for they are the means for the realisation of the Infinite. The three steps to the attainment of true knowledge were stated to be *Śravana* (knowledge that is heard directly from the teacher), *Manana* (critical reflections on the things learnt), and *Nididhyāsana* (complete comprehension of the truth through meditation). The elaborate description of Astha-Yogāṅga, as Professor Kabir has pointed out in an article contributed to the " Ideals of Indian Education and Culture " (Bharat Sevasram Sangh), was intended to lead to complete concentration and perfection of knowledge. This knowledge, according to Yoga, cannot be attained without proper control and culture of the body, the senses, the intellect, the will and the emotions. Elaborate steps were accordingly laid down for the development and cultivation of the will and the emotions, such as *Yama*, *Niyama*, *Āsana*, *Prāṇāyāma*, *Pratyāhāra*, *Dhāraṇa*, *Dhyāna* and *Samādhi*.

Though there were no scientific systems of testing the aptitude of students for different types of education, a general determinant

³ Cf. Kabir : *Indian Philosophy of Education*, pp. 172-173.

being birth or status, there were some essential requirements which the disciple had to satisfy before he could be accepted. The first of these was "*Jijnāsā*" or the questioning spirit, the spirit of inquiry. Another was *Sraddhā* or respect and regard for the teacher and the subject of study. The third condition was discipline and self-control. Also, the pupil must have had some preliminary knowledge and preparation.* We have already referred to the story of Nārada who refused to initiate his prospective disciple into *Brahma-Vidyā* until he had mastered the knowledge of all the secular sciences. Other conditions which the prospective pupil had to satisfy were truthfulness, moral attitude, earnestness, devotion to studies and physical health. Or, as another guru laid down : the students must have the following characteristics : they must be *Dridhishtha*, that is, firm of resolve, firm of will ; *Balishtha*, that is, strong and supple in body ; and *Sishtha*, that is, disciplined.*

The underlying philosophy which education in ancient India supported was that in the quest for Truth, Knowledge and Beauty—for *Ananda*—the mind must be released from the limitations—the bondage—of matter and that the first step in education was to wean the mind away from the attachment to material desires. As Dr. Radhakumud Mookerji has pointed out, "Education is a process of control of mind, to drive it down its deeper layer, its subterranean depths, not ruffled by the ripples of the surface, the infinite distractions of the material world by which the mind wears itself out in fatigue." Compare this with Bergson's words : "The individual's consciousness, delving downwards reveals to him, the deeper he goes, his original personality, to which he may cling as something solid, as means of escape from a life of impulse, caprice and regret. In our innermost selves, we may discover an equilibrium more desirable than one on the surface." (Quoted by Dr. Mookerji). This almost is a transliteration of the Hindu view of education which associates it with the highest goals of spiritual fulfilment. As Professor Kabir has said, the process of education in ancient India

* Kabir : *op. cit.*

* C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyer : Inaugural Address at the Seminar on *A National University* convened by the Indian Committee on Cultural Freedom at Bombay, September, 1962.



"reached its culmination in achieving *Ananda*—poise and joy—arising from the harmonious and successful control and exercise of all the other faculties and elements and the contemplation of the true, the beautiful and the good."⁴ How helplessly we watch our present day students fritter away their energies in the mad, hectic pursuit of material attractions and pleasures at the cost of that higher life which it is the purpose of education to realise !

III

Admission Tests

One of the problems that faces almost all the Universities of India at the present time is the problem of admission of students. In fact, this is a problem which every progressive country is facing today. Each University has its own set of rules governing admission of students to different courses. Some institutions, mainly of the professional or technological kind, hold their own admission tests. The University of Nalanda and the Vikrakṣila Mahāvihāra also used to hold very stringent admission tests with the result that barely 20 per cent of those who sat for these tests got through. Most of the present-day institutions, however, select their students on the basis of the marks obtained at the previous University examination. In ancient India also, preceptors selected their pupils with great discrimination, mainly on the basis of their past records. They used to classify the students as *Uttama*, *Madhyama* and *Adhama* and sometimes they were subjected to ordeal before they were formally initiated and instructed. There was also a system of vocational and educational guidance. In fact, the concept of the *Samskāra* or the tendencies of the student guided his placement, though it later fell into disuse.

* Kabir, *op. cit.*, p. 173.



INDIAN IDEALS OF EDUCATION

IV

Syllabus of Studies

We may now turn to the syllabus of studies. Principal Jogiraj Basu, in a paper contributed to the " Ideals of Indian Education and Culture ", has given us an interesting account of the courses of study as prescribed in the *Satapatha Brāhmaṇa* (11-5). The Vedic literature comprising *Mantra* or *Samhitā*, *Brāhmaṇas*, *Āraṇyakas*, *Upanishads*, and *Vedāṅgas* formed the main subjects of instruction, handed down from generation to generation through oral transmission. This Vedic study was called *Svādhyāya* and formed the basic part of education. Besides these, the courses included precept (*Anusāsanāni*), sciences (*Vidyā*), the dialogue (*Vākobākyam*), traditional myths and legends (*Itihāsa-purāṇam*) and verses recounting deeds of human beings (*Gāthā-Naramashasi*). Also, included in the courses of study were *Sarpa-Vidyā* (science of the snakes), *Raksha Vidyā* (Demonology) and *Asur-Vidyā* (the black art of Necromancy). By the time of the *Chhāndogya-Upanishad*, the list had been added to. It included, besides the four Vedas, the " Veda of the Vedas " (*Vedānañi Vedām*), and *Itihāsa-purāṇa*, the following subjects, namely, Arithmetic, Astrology and the science of divination, the arts of debate and disputation, code of conduct, theology (*Deva-Vidyā*), astronomy, physics and biology (*Bhūta-Vidyā*), toxicology, politics and government (*Kṣhātra-Vidyā*), and dancing and music (*Devajana-Vidyā*).

Thus were almost all the modern disciplines included in the ancient system of education. A complete education was designed to include all these subjects before the pupil could proceed to *Brahma-Vidyā*, knowledge of the Ultimate Reality, or *Parā-Vidyā*. Without this supreme knowledge, all else became " mere words ". The idea behind this comprehensive education was to prepare the student for life here and now as well as for life hereafter. One notable feature of this education was, however, its exclusiveness. The knowledge of the sāstras was the special preserve of the Brahmins, and to a certain extent, of Kṣatriyas. This monopoly was broken when Buddhism broke out in open revolt against Brahmanism and made education available to all. It also gave a mighty push to the education of women.

*The Teacher and the Pupil*

The close contact of the teacher and the taught, or to use its technical equivalent in modern educational language, the maintenance of a proper teacher-pupil ratio as well as the requirement that students should preferably be "in residence" in or near the University campus together with their teachers, received great emphasis in the educational system of ancient India. Under the *Guru-Kula* system, the teacher and the pupil—the preceptor and the disciple—lived together as members of the same family at the preceptor's home, even participating in the daily chores of the household along with the other members of the family. Thus did the disciple enter into the spiritual and intellectual life of the guru, profoundly influenced by the latter's personal example, a training which the formal education of the class-room type utterly fails to provide. Also, the phrase *Chhātrāṇām adhyayanam tapah* was not an empty phrase. Education was meant to be a rigid discipline. As the young student entered upon his study of the *Upanishads*, he had to put up a prayer which has been translated by Professor Kabir as : " May my limbs (*aṅga*), organs of speech (*vāk*), eyes (*cakṣus*), ears (*śrotra*), strength (*vala*) and all other organs (*indriyas*) be nourished and perfected ; all these are means to the realisation of the Infinite. May I not deny the Great One and may not the Great One forsake me. May I acquire those virtues which reside in a person devoted to *Upanishadic* studies." ⁷ The period spent in learning was integrated with the other periods of life under the Varṇāśrama-dharma. It was known as the period of "Brahmacharya". There were two types of students, *Upakurvāṇa* and *Naisthika*. The former type, after completing their education, entered the second order of Varṇāśrama, namely, the *Gṛhasthya* stage, while the latter type, inspired by the great ideal of renunciation, stayed on with the preceptor, observing a vow of perpetual celibacy. Education was free except that when the student left the preceptor's house after completing his education he was enjoined to offer something by way of *guru-dakṣiṇā* to his preceptor without which his learning would become futile. Hence, this type of

⁷ Kabir, *op. cit.*, p. 173.

students were called *Upakurvāṇa*. The pupils were actually maintained by the villagers in the neighbourhood of the *tapovana* where they received their instruction. The pupils begged for alms, even for cooked food, from the villagers, if necessary. The Guru was also called *Āchārya* because he did not accept any fees from his disciples—he did not make a business of education.

One of the conclusions to be drawn from this system is that education was available to only a select few (as the number of *Gurus* under this system must have been limited) and, in view of the stringent conditions imposed on the students, their number could not also have been large. In other words, the system appeared to suggest that education was open to the select few and denied to the masses. It may be interesting to test these conclusions.

There can be no doubt that the preceptor working at home in the *tapovana* (forest-hermitage) was not in a position to entertain a large number of residential students. In *Satapatha Brāhmaṇa*, however, we find references to peripatetic or wandering teachers functioning as "mobile schools of learning", easily available and accessible to students. They were called 'Charakas', the root 'Char' means to 'roam about'. These teachers functioned as an important medium of propagation of learning and culture, carrying wisdom wherever they went. As they were easily accessible and available, they fulfilled a great need of society, that is, of those who would otherwise go without education. Further, in some cases, seats of learning developed which attracted thousands of students and scholars from far and near. Those teachers who maintained a large number of students were given the title of 'Kulapati'. For instance, sage Kaṇva in Kālidāsa's "Abhijñāna-Śakuntalam" was a Kulapati. This title corresponds roughly to the Chancellor of a modern University. In later times, the famous seats of learning at Taxila, Nālandā, Vikram-sīla Mahāvihāra, etc., counted their students by thousands. Most of this grand efflorescence of culture took place under the inspiration of Buddhism. At Nālandā, at one time, 10,000 students lived and studied in the six palatial buildings in the University campus, a huge quadrangle with beautiful gardens. The famous traveller, Hiuen Tsang, found 8,500 students on the rolls of this University and 1,510 teachers. The students did not have to pay any tuition fees. They were each provided with a living room and a study room. In Vikram-



śilā Mahāvihāra (University). 8,000 students would sit together to listen to the lecturer, the Āchārya. Here also the students did not pay any tuition fees.

VI

'Vidyā-Vichāra'

It is not to be supposed, however, that in ancient India all learning emanated directly from the *Guru* or the preceptor. Debates and disputations, discussions and conferences were also a regular feature of the educational and cultural (religious) life of ancient India. In the Vedic texts, debates are termed "Brahmodaya" while in Sanskritic literature the terms used are *Vidyā-Vivāda* or *Vidyā-Vichāra*. The mover of the question was known as the "Praśnin" and the opposer "Abhi-Praśnin". The dialogue method was known as *Vāko-Vākyam*, i.e., words and counter-words. This was logic in embryo. Debating bouts or contests were also organised. In these, not only students but also the teachers participated with great zeal. These were held in educational conferences as well as in religious gatherings. We have many examples of such debating contests in which some of the most brilliant scholars that ancient India had produced participated with great seriousness. He who lost the debates was admitted as the pupil of the victor. More material prizes (with gold coins, thrown in as stakes) were also offered. One of the most famous of such contests in which neither side could defeat the other was that between the great sage Yājñavalkya and the versatile female seer Gārgī, one of the brightest instances of female scholarship in Vedic India. Another instance in which a female scholar participated was that of a debate between Sankarāchārya and Sarasvatī Devī, wife of Mandana Miśra. When Sankarāchārya had defeated Mandana Miśra in arguments, Sarasvatī Devī protested and said that her husband's defeat would not be complete unless Sankara also defeated her. Sankara agreed and then Sarasvatī Devī set him certain problems in the science of sex. Now, as Sankara was a life-long celibate, he could not readily solve the problems. He asked for time to undertake fresh study. After several years of study he returned and was able to solve the riddles that had been set by Mandana Miśra's wife, Sarasvatī Devī. Only then could Sankara's victory over Mandana Miśra be complete. This story proves not only the eminent position



that could be held by a woman savant but, what is more interesting, that a knowledge of the science of sex was regarded as a fit subject of study for the truly learned men (and women) of those times.

VII

Discipline

Just as present day students select their colleges for admission, preferring the one that is best suited for their purpose and circumstances, students in ancient India also sought out their *gurus* with great care and even moved from place to place in search of reputed scholars proficient in the subjects of their choice. The *guru* also prayed for good students. We have already referred to the happy relations that existed between the teachers and the taught, between the preceptor and the disciple. The word of the Guru was law and there must be unquestioning obedience on the part of the pupil. In fact, the concept of discipline arose out of this relationship between the disciple and his *guru*. The very concept of Brahmacarya implied discipline in thought, word and action, viz., *Mānasatapah*, *Bāṇikatapah* and *Kāyikatapah*. This does not, of course, mean that all students were good disciples. For instance, Lord Buddha had a very difficult time with Devadatta who had conspired to kill the Master. Rāmānuja who later attained fame as a Vāishnava saint had trouble with his celebrated teacher at Kāñcipuram. Mahāvīra, the Jain Tirthaṅkar, had to expel his disciple. The sage Yājñavalkya had to desert his master Vaiśampāyana. Fortunately such cases were rare. Students had generally to abide by strict injunctions and rules of discipline. There were even detailed rules of conduct. The *Satapatha Brāhmaṇa* gives a graphic picture of a student's initiation. Says the Ācārya to the young entrant to his home : " From today thou art a student observing vows ; do your duty ; place fuel in the sacred fire ; be obedient to the teacher ; do not sleep in the day time ; observe continence " etc. Lighting the " gārhapatyāgnī ", the holy domestic fire, is like kindling his own mind with fire. And then he should daily beg for alms, for that way was created humility in the pupil's mind. He should beg for alms first of the preceptor's wife and then of his own mother with the appeal " *Bhagawati, Vikshūm dehi*" . And when he completed his life as a Brahmacārin, he

placed the last fuel in the sacrificial fire and performed ablutions—*snīnam*. Now he was termed “*Snātaka*” and left the tapovana for his home. This is described as the return home or *Samāvartana*. That is why the message given by the Guru at the time of parting is called “*Samāvartana-Bhāṣya*”, the Convocation Address.

The student's code of conduct as enjoined, for instance, in the *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa* would be a cause of despair, if not of resentment, to a modern student. The latter is, of course, not expected to light the home fire in the teacher's home or rear his cattle. But what about the following : “A student should overcome various passions such as sleep, lethargy, anger, greed, vanity, hankering after name and fame, bragging, cultivation of personal beauty. He should shun the company of women, music, dancing, dandyism, scents, drinking and the like addictions that stand as a bar to the formative stage of one's life.”* Thus did the student spend his days in an ideal atmosphere of learning, renunciation, discipline and strict continence under the paternal care of the preceptor who himself set the ideal, far away from the din and bustle of the everyday world.

VIII

The Position of Women

The position of women in the Vedic times was very high. They had access to Vedic studies (the Sūdras being excluded) and also worked as teachers. Some of them were even authors of Vedic hymns and were called *Brahma-Vādinīs*. These latter included such famous names as those of Viśvavārā, Mālā, Kaksivatī, Ghoṣā, Romaśā, Lopāmudrā, etc. We have also the examples of Indrāṇī, Yami, Urvaśī, and others who were authors of parts of Vedic hymns. There is also evidence that from the time of the Rigveda down to the age of Sutra literature, women were initiated with the sacred thread, i.e., underwent *Upanayan* Sacrament, uttered Sāvitri or Gāyatrī, tended Homāgni (sacramental fire) and studied the Vedas. The Brahma-vādinīs observed continence and led a life of renunciation. The

* See Article on *Education in Vedic India* by Principal J. Basu in the *Ideal of Indian Education and Culture* (Bharat Sevasrama Sangha).

practice of women wearing the sacred thread had, however, become obsolete by the time of Manu though stray instances of such practice could be found even up to the 7th century A.D. Women savants included not merely the Brahmvādinīs like Gārgī or Maitreyī, but also scholarly women ascetics known as "Paribrājikā" or "Siddha-Tāpasī." In the post-Vedic age we find Līlābatī, Khanā, Ubhayabhāratī and other equally distinguished names. We find women even taking part in warfare. Patanjali uses the term "Saktikī" to denote women who could throw spears (javelin?). Megasthenes reports that he saw strong bands of Amazonian type of ladies in war-like uniform in the palace of Candragupta. There is thus no doubt that the physical, mental and spiritual achievements of women in the Vedic—even in the post-Vedic—period were remarkably high.

IX

The Farewell : Convocation Address

It would be pertinent to make a reference to the ancient *Samā-vartana* ceremony. It was a simple and dignified ceremony when the *guru*, or the *preceptor*, bade farewell to the young *Brahmacārin*, now a "Snātaka", after the successful conclusion of his stay at the guru's home. At the Convocation of the Calcutta University every year, the Vice-Chancellor, while admitting the graduates to their respective degrees monotonously and mechanically chants the following formula :—"By virtue of the authority vested in me as Vice-Chancellor of the University, I admit you to the degree of....and charge you that ever in your life and conversation you show yourselves worthy of the same". He is followed by another eminent personality who generally deals with some problem or problems facing the Universities with the usual peroration as to the duties and obligations of the students. The degrees or the diplomas formerly used to be handed out by the Chancellor of the University and later on by the Vice-Chancellor, personally. When the number of recipients became too large, the diplomas were handed out in bundles to the respective college groups by members of the administrative staff of the University before the commencement of the Convocation. This practice also has now been discontinued. Diplomas are now sent directly



to the colleges in official packets to be handed out probably by a clerk in the College Office. Students have also re-acted to this change in their own characteristic way. An utter lack of respect for the solemnity of the occasion permeates the whole atmosphere of the ceremony. In contrast to this one may visualise the simple ceremony at the Guru's home in the *tapovanas* of ancient India. The *Taittiriya Upanishad* gives in detail the text of the guru's advice to the young "Snātaka" who would stand before him, after a bath in the river, clad in the robes of the *Brahmaçarin*, in all modesty, to receive his blessings. The guru, in his address, enjoined on the *Snātaka* to speak the truth, to practise righteousness, not to deviate from his studies, not to deviate from truth or righteousness or from what is good or noble. He was ordered to honour his mother, his father and his Ācārya (Preceptor) as divinities and to perform only such work as is above reproach and not such work as attracts blame or condemnation. He is told that he must be firm as a rock, and be sharp as an axe, and be worthy as gold. Then he would bless the young man that he might be endowed with the highest good, that he might become the friend and powerful protector of all men and that he might live for a hundred autumns. Then the *Snātaka* would touch the feet of the guru, in humble and respectful obeisance and with a piece of fuel from the holy fire, leave for his home, inspired and rejuvenated with the guru's blessings. Here, then, was a text of commandments, lofty in concept, inspiring in their message, a direction to the young entrant at the threshold of life to fulfil his obligations to himself, to his family and to society.⁹

Could there be any nobler purpose or idea behind Education ?

X

Assessment : (a) The Individual and the Society

This short description of the educational system of ancient India is sufficient to warrant the view that, as Dr. Shrimali has said, " the

⁹ According to the *Upanishads*, the aim of education is to use the different *Koshas* that surround the Spirit as instruments of achieving good life. It is to generate "the spirit of action and enjoyment free from all attachment". The exhortation to the young *Brahmaçarin* is a pointer to the first steps to that good life. In fact, as Prof. Kabir has pointed out, " Ancient India recognised the social obligations of the individual in a way that has rarely been surpassed".

aims of education are determined by the values which a society cherishes". Ancient Hindu society looked upon education as a means for the liberation of the individual spirit from the bondage of evil. It is thus that *Brahma-Vidya* is achieved. It receives fulfilment in the purified human soul's identification with the Infinite which is the state of Supreme Bliss, *Bhūmaiva Sukham*. All education is but preparation for that ultimate outcome. It is also a process of purification through *nishkāma Bhakti*, disinterested devotion, which was, in a sense, the most characteristic principle of the Indian philosophy of education. Finally, education was no less a matter of individual fulfilment. It is not to be supposed that the Hindu ideal was one of the complete renunciation of all worldly interests.¹⁰ That was the consummation to be attained during the final stage of the *Varnāśrama Dharma*. Dharma, Artha, Kāma and then comes Moksha, the release of the body from its material chains.¹¹ What the ideal enjoined was the *disinterested* pursuit of the objective of each stage of life, in the disinterested discharge of duties pertaining to each successive station of life, until at the last stage, he reached the supreme objective, the identity of Self with *Brahman*.

Now, in contrast to this, the educational system of the West has followed a somewhat different path. In one word, it can be defined that while perfection of man, including that of the faculties of his body, mind and spirit, in short, the realization of his best self, continues to be the aim of education, the making of a good citizen, the promotion of good life, the development of a broad humanism through a liberalization of the spirit—these are as much a concern of the educational systems of today as the perfection of the individual man. Education, in other words, has today a much broader aim than that of individual fulfilment. The development of man's capacities is not the only the objective ; the social implications of this development are of equal concern. So education begins with the

¹⁰ See Kabir : *Indian Philosophy of Education*, p. 174.

¹¹ The final release, however, depends upon the due discharge by man of his three *rīyas*—*Deva-Rīya*, *Rishi-Rīya*, and *Pitri-Rīya*; his three obligations to his gods, the sages and to his forefathers. These obligations are discharged by (i) sacrifice through worship and reverence ; (ii) study, that is, acquisition and dissemination of knowledge and (iii) assuming the obligations of parenthood and perpetuation of the family.

nursery, even the pre-nursery stage. The adjustment of the child to the social environment, his socialisation through various kinds of experience, is the beginning of the educative process. In other words, the social aspect of education has received great emphasis in modern educational practice. The harmonious development of the individual as a member of the society is a cardinal tenet of modern educational philosophy.

Similarly, a modern University does not consist merely o a certain relationship between the teacher and the taught. The University today is part of the larger community. It has ceased to be confined to the cloister, or to the *tapovans* for that matter, far from the madding crowd. It is a great co-operative nexus of the present and the past, of the teachers and the taught in a collective sense, of the man working in the laboratory and the man working behind the plough or at the wheels of production. It is, in a manner, the process, as Prof. Humayun Kabir has put it, by which individuals and communities enrich their own experience by drawing upon the experiences of others in present and past generations. No longer does man require to depend upon intuition to realise the great Truths of Life. He appeals to reason, to experience, and test the same on the broad anvil of humanism. As Dr. R. C. Majumdar, the distinguished historian, has put it : "The distinguishing criterion of University education and view of life is its humanism which carries with it not only a mode of thinking but also a way of living. It accepts reason as its arbiter and also certain principles like truth, justice, equity, good-will, charity, kindness and honesty as guides of conduct."

(b) *Science and Technology*

We shall, in the next chapter, proceed to analyse the values implicit in the modern system of education, but here it is necessary to emphasise one particular aspect of education on which the modern age lays special emphasis. That is education in Science and Technology. In the ancient system of education, humanistic studies received a great deal of attention though science was not altogether neglected. We have seen how a man in ancient India was supposed to be versed in such sciences as Physics, Biology, Toxicology, Mathematics, Astronomy, etc., before he could proceed to cultivate *Parā-Vidya*.

Modern educationists do not regard the pursuit of these sciences as ancillary or subsidiary to the spiritual quest after Truth. In fact, modern science, both in its fundamental and applied aspects, is itself a quest after Truth. Here is disinterested pursuit of truth and beauty, here, that is to say, in the laboratory, where the young student, completely absorbed in his work, oblivious of his immediate surroundings, is experimenting with the hidden secrets and the mighty power of Nature, as much as with the depths of the human personality.

(c) *Some Contrasts*

And yet, one should be justified in saying that the main difference between the ancient and modern systems of education, despite the millenia that separate them, is not one of substance but of relative emphasis. The accumulated knowledge during the intervening period has also been a factor that has enabled man to go farther than their ancestors on the road to the understanding of life, not in its philosophical abstraction but as a new experience based on verifiable facts. If ancient India excelled in thought, contemporary India believes more in action. But here again it is a question of emphasis. Perhaps we had prototypes of nuclear weapons, of guided missiles, of rockets that pierce the heavens, of great engineering feats, of life-giving medicines in the Vedic or the Pouranic ages. But these were shrouded in mythical lore, that confuses the modern mind. Similarly, in the field of educational practice, there was a good deal in the ancient systems from which we, men of the twentieth century, can even now learn a lot. Nobody, in those days, joined in a loud protest because 20 per cent. passed the admission test for entering a University. A *Kulapati* could, without any opprobrium, preside over the destinies of 10,000 students or more at a centre of learning. It is stated that Nālandā had 1,500 teachers for 8,500 students, the ratio being a little than 1 : 5. Education was free for all these students ; in addition to that, the students got their study rooms and living rooms. The science of sex was considered an important subject for study. Discipline had a much wider connotation in those days that it has now, for it meant discipline in thought, words and deeds. It was regarded as a form of



tapasyā—mīnasatapah, bāṇikatapah and kāyikatapah requiring more an attitude of dedication than mere conformism. The same spirit ran through the Guru's exhortations to the young learner both at the time of the student's initiation into the life of a *Brahmaçārin* and when he left the Guru's āshrama on completion of his education ready to take his allotted duties as a householder. Women, too, had an honoured place in learned circles. Women scholars freely met their men counterparts in abstruse discussions, though it is not fully known how far this equality of the sexes was in evidence in the ordinary walks of life. But the wife was a *Sahadharminī* and her husband could not successfully perform the religious rites without her company ; she would be, in a real spiritual sense, his better half. At the same time she, as a woman, was not debarred from acquiring wisdom and learning in her own right, to be *Siddhatāpasi* if not *Brahmavādini*.

It is true that this glorious chapter of our cultural and spiritual tradition was later on overtaken by a dark period of history. Brāhmaṇism degenerated and was, perhaps, reduced to a cult, until Buddhism came on the scene to preach a virile faith whose message was carried beyond the confines of this country and captured the minds and hearts of countless millions to reach whom it had to cross the barriers of mountains and of oceans. It preached a new gospel of human worth and dignity, brought education to the masses, subsidised education for them by establishing Vihāras and Saṅghārāmas and even travelled to the remotest corners of the earth through *Silālipis* (stone inscriptions). The period of Indian history that followed this new efflorescence of Indian thought and spirit is recent history and need not be discussed here. Under the British regime, for the first time, we were hitched to the wagon of an alien culture, but with the powers of assimilation characteristic of Indian cultural genius, this country soon made this new force an instrument for the enrichment and regeneration of her own society and culture. But foreign political domination, as distinguished from its cultural impact, left deep scars on the body politic and hurt our age-old scale of values. This would not, of course, have been possible but for internal conflicts and fissures that had segmented and fractionalised our society and the large measure of obscurantism that had enveloped the fundamental understanding of the religious and philosophical bases of our life in society.

Secondly, the emergence of Islam as a political and religious force provided the British rulers with a fertile ground for sowing the seeds of discord and disunity among the peoples of India and an excuse for military intervention in the interests of their trade and commerce. Thus was the British Imperialist flag unfurled over the field of Plassey and elsewhere and the spirit of India entered once again a state of coma. Of an India immersed in a deep spiritual meditation into the ultimate verities of life, Matthew Arnold wrote :

*" She let the legions thunder past
And plunged in thought again."*

The new legions that had descended upon the field of Plassey did not, however, mean to thunder past but meant to stay. That was the crux of the new situation.

(d) Secular Education

This meant that a new set of values had arisen and so the educational system which had to seek adjustment with the new values underwent a sea-change. The new learner has now no call to seek for abstract truths. He has to seek, instead, for jobs. He is not interested in "Brahma Vidyā" but in a secular type of education that will help him secure material gains and rewards. Life is now a matter of living. Freedom from material worry is now more in demand than freedom of the spirit. Employers, not God, are thought more worthy of propitiation. The political "Boss" has become the new Dispenser. The Guru has become a salaried employee himself. Examinations are just meant to be "passed", not to be tests of excellence, not certainly a path to the attainment of spiritual fulfilment. Studies, in short, are meant to be job-oriented. Students select their courses with an eye to their job-potential. The minimum requirement is a degree ; for the large majority, it becomes the be-all and end-all of education.

This was the state of things which, generally speaking, we got as a legacy of British Rule. In the latter days of the British Raj, the country had, indeed, awakened to the consciousness of a spiritual vacuum. It was the *Swadesī* agitation of the first decade of the present century that witnessed a resurgence of the national spirit. Later, Gandhiji's emergence brought about a funda-



mental transformation of the entire scene. I need not go into the details of this transformation, except to point out that in the background of this transformation there was the awakening of a new faith in *Ātma-Sakti*. It found expression, in the sphere of literary and cultural effort, in the contributions made by a brilliant galaxy of writers and thinkers led by men like Bankim Chandra, Aurobindo, Rabindranath, not to mention others. It was about this time also that Asutosh Mookerjee established his leadership over the University of Calcutta to preach the same gospel of national will and power—the result of a unique intellectual struggle in which the British were fought with their own weapons. Our masters are gone but the struggle against ignorance still continues along with the struggle against poverty. Old values are under scrutiny while new values are struggling to be born. We are once again groping for spiritual values, once again turning to the wisdom of the Upanishads, once again trying to re-convert our educational effort into a quest for truth, for a release of the human spirit, the highest possible development of intellect and character. This is not going to be an easy thing in an age poisoned with a number of malignant 'ism's. The modern concept of a Secular State is, in a manner, the nation's response to a fluid situation, its life-line against the fissiparous forces of disintegration. Secular education is a concomittant of the secularism of the State.

But does secularism mean a disavowal of our ancient culture ? That culture had its roots in religion. In a country that now shelters so many religions, the State is faced with an insuperable difficulty if it resolves to impart a religious bias to education. Obviously there is no, there can be no, " National " Religion in India. As all citizens in this great democracy of ours are equal in the eyes of law, the State's only policy will have to be religious neutrality, based on respect for all religions, religious tolerance and forbearance. Our ancient pattern of education also taught us the virtues of tolerance and forbearance. What, after all, do we mean by Religion ? If it has a place in man's life, how can it be avoided in our educational system ? If religion has brought feuds and bred conflicts in this world, has it not also been a great force for bringing harmony, peace and stability to the lives of countless human beings ? Therefore, secularism in education should be based on a careful discrimina-

tion between what is right and what is wrong in religion, between its fundamentals and a debased practice of rituals. The universal truths that all the noble religions of the world preach could well form part of an integrated course of education, of our search for Truth. There is a large area of human thought and action where all the great religions of the world speak in one voice. Underlying allt he external manifestations of different religions there is the Religion of Man. Can we not make it a reality through education ?

The ancient seers of India taught us that education is a spiritual process of self-purification and self-fulfilment. Modern thought has thrown new light on this ideal. The ideal is that of social harmony. If man is to be at peace with himself, he must be at peace with society. Modern education emphasises the principle of social adjustment. The struggles of the common man for existence form part of the great riddle of Life which Lord Buddha had once set out to explore, and which still puts a question mark before our great educators. It is not altogether without significance that our planners have placed Education in the category of " Social Services". The great truths have to be discovered through the maze, the great complex, of inter-human relations, which is society. Man's *Tapasyā* has been invested with a new meaning, service to fellow men as the way to God ; and *tapovana* is none other than the world itself. It is here, in this world, that God resides. It is here that man must follow his pursuits in a spirit of selfless dedication, of *nishkāma dharma*. It is here that he would preach the Religion of Man (*Dharma*) ; convert Wealth (*Artha*) into the instrument of Welfare ; satisfy his Desire, his Passion (*Kāma*), for the eradication of poverty, disease and ignorance and bring Happiness and Beauty in human life ; and it is here that he must bend his efforts to release the spirit of the world from the grip of Fear, the Fear of Evil (*Moksha*). It is only thus that we can, as Romain Rolland said of Vivekananda, sign the treaty of peace between the warring forces of Reason and Faith ; and with Rabindranath, let us declare our belief " in a spiritual world, not as anything separate from this world, but as its innermost truth".



CHAPTER IV

EDUCATION IN TRANSITION

I

An Interval

In a sense, education is always in transition. There is no doubt that there are certain elements of more or less permanent value in the educational thought of a country based on its traditions and culture patterns. There is also a universal aspect in which education reflects the eternal quest of the human spirit. This universal human spirit finds expression in the world's classics and its humanistic studies, in philosophy, art and culture. Science, again, knows no frontiers. Whether we study the science of the human mind or the science of nuclear fission, we do not deal with national labels. What they teach is the common heritage of humanity. The whole world follows closely the advancement of human knowledge through research. Therefore, whether we take a country as our basis or we speak in the context of the whole of the human world, we are left in no doubt that education builds up the intellectual traditions of human society which, in general, provide the guidelines and conditions for further progress. We cannot simply brush aside these traditions which have grown out of the accumulated knowledge of the human race, just as we cannot deny the genetic composition of the human body.

But education also reflects a way of life. That is why we have spoken of "Indian ideals" of education. The "gurukulas" of ancient India were in consonance with a certain way of life. The ideals enshrined in the ancient sacred texts of India stood for something which was native to the soil of India and the genius of its people. They required the hermitage of a saint, and the concept of a Varnāśrama dharma, which had no parallel in any other part of the world. That there are, and there have been, dedicated teachers all over the world who have led ascetic lives is not disputed. The concept of a well-ordered life, in which the role of education is precisely defined, has also not been unknown to the educational theory and practice



of other lands. But the attempt at the complete integration of a philosophy of education with the ways of life of the people,¹ the concept that education provided the stages towards the realisation of the Absolute that is in each man through a well-integrated series of āśramas, reflected a purely Indian (Hindu) view of life. If this point, the point that education reflects a way of life, is recognised, it will be obvious that education, in spite of the fact that it is based on the intellectual traditions of the people and have thus an enduring aspect, is, nevertheless, a dynamic concept for the simple reason that society itself is dynamic and progressive and its dynamism is reflected, among other things, in changes in values. The changes may be swift and abrupt as when a successful revolution rocks the social and political foundations of a country as in Russia or in China ; or, very often, they are long-term and secular, with a period of stagnation or experimentation intervening before the changes are recognised.

In India, both kinds of change have been visible since the decline of traditional Hindu culture. India has been the meeting ground of numerous streams of culture some of which mingled with the main stream, some perhaps were lost in the sands, and some whose origin dated even beyond the Vedas became a matter for archaeologists. Among the elements that have fused with the main stream of Hindu culture are the various race elements, including Dravidian, which even now persist in the popular religious practices of Hindu India, in the worship of popular gods and goddesses, in folk culture, in popular festivals, in agricultural practices, in food habits, in architecture, in town planning. Later on, there was further intermixture of cultural and religious systems contributing to the development of a composite Indian culture.

One of the major streams of culture which has more or less run parallel to the main stream of Hindu culture and maintained its independent and distinctive existence throughout history has been Muslim culture. For nearly 1200 years since their advent in this

¹ While I recognise that there can be no philosophy which is valid only for the Indian or the Greek any more than there can be physics which is valid only for a particular country, yet there are different "schools" or systems of thought which have emanated from or confined to particular areas though they may, as they do, convey truths that are universal in their concept or application. The question of the integration of a philosophy of education with the way of life of a people is characteristically Indian.



country, the followers of the Prophet have kept their identity in tact in the face of the powerful influence of Hindu thought and culture. There have been contacts, not all of them hostile, as we shall presently see. It would, however, be interesting to review their educational system.

The main institutions of Muslim education are the *muktab* and the *madrassa*. Both of these—the *muktab* particularly—were attached to the mosques—the Muslim places of worship—and subsidiary to it. The main purpose of the *muktabs* originally was to teach the *Quran* to the young children, particularly those portions of it which would enable them to participate in religious practices. *Muktabs* also taught the 3 R's and some general knowledge. The *madrassas* were primarily meant to teach theology and philosophy though some of them were raised to the status of a University. The curriculum included grammar, logic, philosophy, theology, literature, jurisprudence and science. It is not that all the *madrassas* taught all the subjects. In other words, some of the *madrassas*, specialised in the teaching of some of the subjects, while others specialised in other subjects. It was a pastime with many of the Muslim (Pathan) rulers to destroy and desecrate Hindu temples, and build mosques as well as *madrassas* on the site. Some of the Muslim rulers were real patrons of learning. Feroze Shah Tuglak was reported to be one of them. The town of Ferozabad which he established earned fame as an important centre of learning. It is said that he built at least 30 colleges with attached mosques, and that he introduced craft training for the slaves. Similarly, the city of Agra during the term of Sikandar Lodi earned fame as a centre of learning. Later on centres of Muslim learning spread over many other parts of the country. Many of the centres imparted education of a high standard based on Islam. The Jaunpur State (now in Uttar Pradesh) also became a famous seat of Muslim learning. The Bahamani rulers also established many schools and centres of higher learning.

It is needless to multiply examples. The Muslim rulers had their own educational system and naturally promoted their own culture. The education imparted was predominantly theological and based on the teachings of the *Quran*, particularly in the *muktabs* and the generality of *madrassas*. The normal picture was that of an exclusive educational system with little contact with the institu-

tions of Hindu culture. Rather, the general atmosphere was one of hostility towards Hindu seats of learning. Yet there were one or two circumstances which brought Hindu and Muslim learning on a common plane. The first was the necessity of learning the Court language for both Muslims and Hindus. While the Islamic scriptures were written in Arabic, the Court language was Persian. Hindus had to study Persian and many of them were able to establish their proficiency in that language. On the other hand, the Muslims started translating Hindu books into Persian. One interesting result of these culture contacts was the evolution of the Urdu language which developed more or less as a spoken language in the north. This new language had a large vocabulary of Persian and Arabic words. It soon became a vehicle of Hindu-Muslim communication and contact. Even now Urdu is one of the major spoken languages of north India.

This Hindu-Muslim cultural contact in which each of the parties more or less maintained its own cultural and educational system continued for close upon 1000 years. As Humayun Kabir tells us, this long period of contact between two streams of culture established a *modus vivendi* rather than an intellectual integration.² The *madrassas* which received State patronage mainly taught (Muslim) theology, philosophy and linguistics. These were based principally on Muslim religion and culture so that the general mass of Hindu students were not attracted towards these institutions. On the other hand, many of the *Muktabs* had Hindu enrolment which increased with the gradual widening of Hindu-Muslim contacts. Many of the Pathan rulers employed Hindu pundits as counsellors and honoured them with titles. Thus in the 14th century, Sultan Jalaluddin honoured Pandit Vrihaspati Miśra with the titles of "Rai-Mukutamaṇi" and "Pandit Sārvabhauma" after placing him on the back of an elephant and sprinkling water on him from a golden pitcher. Again, Pandits Sanatan and Rupa, two brothers, were like the two hands of Sultan Hussain Shah of Bengal. The former was *Dabir Khas*, or Private Secretary to Sultan while the latter was his *Sakar Mallik* or Chief

² Kabir : *Indian Philosophy of Education*, p. 188.

Secretary.³ There were also cultural contacts through certain religious or mystic movements. The *Sufis* as well as the *Bauls* of Bengal rose over narrow religious or communal bigotries. The "Ultā-Sādhakas", as Dr. Sasibhushan Dasgupta⁴ has shown, represented a class of mendicant-philosophers belonging to diverse communities who derived their inspiration from the highest spiritual concepts of Indian philosophy. The *Sufis* and the *Bauls* also belonged to this cultural group. These mystic poets and bards, the Sants and the Sādhakas, formed a remarkable group of humanists who rose high above narrow religious or communal conceits to preach the message of humanism and the spiritual salvation of man. In short, India, time and again, proved her catholicity, her receptivity to different streams of culture, as well as her power of assimilation at all levels, which was spiritual and humanistic in its range. That was the tradition so ably interpreted in modern times by Swami Vivekananda, disciple of Sri Rāmakrishna Paramahānsa.

In a sense, this assimilation was going on on the peripheries of the new culture contacts. It was Emperor Akbar who, among the Muslim rulers, tried to give India the elements of a secular education. He introduced such general courses of study as arithmetic, geometry, logic as also such practical arts as public administration, accountancy and agriculture. He was opposed to the traditional system of educating the child with "an unduly heavy burden of books" and laid down what under contemporary conditions must have been a remarkable thesis, namely, that "care should be taken to see that the child understands everything himself, but the teacher may help him a little". Thus, indeed, with remarkable insight, Akbar had, in a manner, anticipated Rousseau and some other champions of the new mode of child education. Professor Kabir also refers to Aurangzeb, another Moghul Emperor, who in admonishing his teacher who had congratulated him on his accession to the throne laid down the fundamental principles of secular education which his teacher had failed to provide.⁵ These were, of course, cases of an exceptional

³ Sukumar Sen : *Madhya-yugor Bāṅglā-O-Bāṅgālēe* (Viśva-Vid्या Sangraha, Viśva-Bharati).

⁴ S. B. Dasgupta : *Bhāratiya Sādhanār Aikya* (The Unity of Indian Culture), Viśva-Bharati, Santiniketan. The "Ultā-Sādhakas" were a class of saints or mendicants who looked inward rather than outward (rituals and practices) for realisation of Self.

⁵ Kabir : *op. cit.*, p. 192.

nature. By and large, Hindu and Muslim systems of education ran along parallel and exclusive lines, the village *pāthsālā*, and the *tol* on the one hand and the *muktab* and the *madrassa* on the other. It was this dual system which the British invaders found in operation in India.

There are one or two points which deserve mention in assessing the educational contributions of this period. The main point that attracts our notice is that the whole of the educational system, whether under the Hindu or the Muslim or the Buddhist periods, was academic, cultural and religious in its range. Of course, a good deal of attention was paid in ancient India to practical arts as well as professional subjects. But we do not have much evidence of such training in what may be aptly described as the dark age of education. The Buddhist Mahāvihāras were meant for the intellectual *elite* with admission strictly regulated. Yet the rush for admissions showed on the one hand the excellence of the teaching imparted in those Universities that attracted even foreign scholars from distant countries while, on the other hand, since one only out of twenty on an average could be admitted, it indicated the very widespread demand for higher education that existed in the country. So far as education for the masses is concerned, we do not find much evidence of any large scale constructive interest in the organization of elementary education in India. Such education continued to be the concern of *gurumahasayas* holding their classes in thatched mud-built cottages in the villages on a small pittance. In these *pāthsālās* students were initiated into the rudiments of reading, writing and arithmetic such as an average man would require for his day to day transactions. There were hardly any specific institutions for technical or vocational training. Such training used to be imparted in the hereditary school of the family where the artisans' children learnt from the hand of their parents. In some cases, the family school or the school run by caste guilds took in apprentices. Under the Sultanate of Delhi, special efforts were made to establish institutions for the training of arts and crafts to meet the requirements for goods and services in the ruling households and Government departments. Naturally, the majority of the students were Muslims, a fact which possibly explains why the skilled artisans and craftsmen in India for several generations have been predominantly Muslim in certain lines. The



skills, created under the encouragement of the Muslim rulers, passed into a hereditary tradition, handed down from the guru to the disciple.

These constitute some of the phases of transition in the chequered history of this country during the centuries preceding British rule. During this long period, education followed more or less the traditional lines, though there was often a clash of values due to the advent of foreign systems. A new synthesis of culture was promised by wandering saints, mystic poets and bards that preached their message of love and of human longing for spiritual fulfilment—the chief inspiration behind ancient Indian education—by their travels in different parts of the country. It was the Buddhist achievements in the sphere of higher learning that stood out as a strong beacon of light that beamed across the frontiers of this country in that otherwise more or less barren age. The revolutionary transformation of the entire scene was yet to come.

II

Towards New Values

When we speak of "modern" India, we speak of an India which is separated from the India described in the previous chapter by several thousands of years. These years have seen great changes; the greatest of these have been in the realm of values.

The millenia that separate India of today from the India of the Upanishads make it difficult for us to reduce the two ages to a common denominator. The two Indias speak in different languages, literally as well as figuratively. They measure by different standards. It would, therefore, be as unrealistic to judge the past by the present as it would be folly to judge the present by the past. We can speak, with nostalgic wistfulness, of the "golden past" just as we can be ecstatic over the scientific and technological achievements of the present century. Or, conversely, we can focus on the dark spots of our ancient civilization as uncritically as we can hold forth on the spiritual emptiness of modern life. In either case we try to interpret the one in terms of the other. A man in 4000 B.C. would not probably agree with the interpretation of his culture given by a man of 2000 A.D. Just as if a man of 4000 B.C. were to appear



in our midst today he would find faults in our system which we, on our part, would not perhaps, recognise as such.

The writer of a short monograph on "Government and Education," published more than 30 years ago, asks this question : "Had the Hindu Kings of India any definite policy in Education?" And then answers the question by saying that if any of our Hindu kings ever turned his attention to the intellectual improvement of the people of his State as a whole, his efforts have been completely forgotten. Even granting the writer's thesis that no Hindu Sovereign had any "comprehensive scheme of public instruction" it is evident that he is trying to assess the past in a language that is foreign to it : just as a Guru fresh from the *tapovana* would possibly be disgusted at the sight of the modern teacher in a multi-storied college in Calcutta. The fact is that the State in ancient India was a great patron of learning but did not think it within the province of the king to lay down policy in a field exclusively reserved to the wise and the learned. We can, perhaps, recall the relation of Shivaji with his preceptor, Ramdas, as an illustration of the traditional relation between a disciple and his guru, even when the disciple happened to be wearing the crown. Should the King dare lay down the policy for the guru ? The point is, the function of the State in those days would hardly bear interpretation in modern terms.

For education in those days was a matter of individual pursuit, not a mass phenomenon. And the Brahmin ascendancy in the realm of education was in tune with the sacerdotal character of ancient Hindu Society. Let us assume that this prerogative of the Brahmin was exclusive. We, under a democratic system, condemn, and rightly condemn, according to our own lights, this exclusiveness based on birth, or an intellectual dominance based on caste. Even then our criticism should be tempered with knowledge. Actually, the lowest of the *varṇas* in ancient India were regarded ineligible for the pursuit of the highest knowledge. These *varṇas* were based on occupational differentiation, because caste based on birth had not become as rigid in the Vedic age as it became several centuries later. We had instances of Brahmins who had become 'fallen' ; of non-Brahmins who had risen to great spiritual heights. In fact, a Brahmin was a Brahmin by his spiritual excellence, by his knowledge and wisdom, by his indifference to worldly pleasures. Have



we not examples of "Rājarshis" (saintly Kings) in the annals of Hindu India?

It is not the purpose of this chapter to defend Brahminism or the caste system. On the contrary, it is necessary to point out that during the Vedic age, Brahminism does not appear to have been a hereditary concept. One can point to the "Brahmaparva" of *Bhabīṣya Purāṇa* for proof that the ancient Indians did not recognize any hereditary differentiation between the Brahmin and the Sūdra. The *Bhabīṣya Purāṇa*, after rejecting all the arguments that could be put forward to differentiate between a Brāhmaṇa and Sūdra states :

चत्वार एकस्य पितुः सुताश्च
तेषां सुतानां खलु जातिरेका ।
एवं प्रजानां हि पितंक एव
पित्रे कभावान् न च जानिभेद ॥ ब्रह्मपर्व, ४१, ४५ ॥

[“When all the four *Varnas* are descended from the same Father, they are all of one caste (?). There cannot be any caste differentiation among children of the same father.”]

Again, as Pandit Kshitimohan Sen has pointed out in his monograph on “Bhārater Saṁskriti” (The Culture of India), the *Brahma-suṣika Upanishad* declares that he alone who has realized the Ātman is a true Brāhmaṇa. Bhīṣma in *Mahābhārata* says that the real test of the Brāhmaṇa is his sense of Unity, of Equality, of Truth, of perfect behaviour, of *ahimsā*, simplicity, meditation and utter indifference to the results of work (*Mahābhārata*, “Sānti Parva”). So also *Kathak Saṁhitā* in *Yajurveda* says that a Brāhmaṇa is known by his wisdom, not by his ancestry. *Brahma Purāṇa* says that a Brahmana is known by his character. It is to be noted that the authors of all these books were Brāhmaṇas. Opposition to caste differentiation in the different Vedas, Upanishads and Purāṇas was voiced by the Brahmanas. It appears that the tolerance of the caste system was a product of the gradual evolution of Hinduism when it was brought face to face with different culture complexes. It was, so it is said, Hinduism's desperate attempt to bring about unity through diversity gradually assimilating these external cultural strands into the fabric of Hinduism.

This is not an attempt to defend the ancient system. It is only suggested that in judging the values of any era, regard must be had

to the prevailing social norms of the age and an attempt should be made to have a correct understanding of the socio-religious system before we rush to conclusions.

The lower castes were, no doubt, debarred from the study of the *Vedas* in those times. It is now recognised that the differentiation between the so-called lower castes and the so-called upper castes was based chiefly on occupations. The old *Varnāśrama* was not a rigid or inflexible system. In fact, it was a differentiation on the basis of "guṇa" or "karma". Even if "guṇa" is interpreted in terms of heredity, have we not a very powerful hereditarian school among our modern sociologists? The truth is that those who followed lowly occupations did not bother about going to the solitude of the Himalayas to meditate in order to earn merit or salvation. So also the British cabbie does not bother about Hegel or Kant and the Indian *Panwalla* does not bother about the philosophy of Saṅkara or the Grammar of Pāṇini. I know I would get the retort that even if the *panwalla* is not attracted by Pāṇini or Saṅkara, nothing would stand in the way of his son becoming a Pāṇini or Saṅkara, if he has the gifts in him. A genius in a family of mediocrities is a deviation, a freak. There were such deviations in ancient India also. But is there any doubt that there is now a far greater measure of freedom of choice than was available to men in our hoary past? This might be interpreted to mean that stability of the traditional Hindu society rested on a nice balancing of social forces based upon a division of labour sanctified, as was usual in those days, by religious sanctions or taboos.

It is, of course, possible to over-emphasise a point. For example, apropos of the caste system, one can quote any number of examples from our *Purāṇas* of marriage between Brāhmaṇ Rishis and non-Brāhmaṇ women. The issue of one such marriage was the author of *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*. The word "Aitareya" is derived from "Itar" which means a low-born (person). The author, Mahidās, was born of a Sūdra woman, Itara. Yet he became versed in all the śāstras. Today if anyone wishes to study the *Rig Veda*, he must first study *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*. This example is symbolic of the real spirit of Hinduism. It is also to be understood that Hinduism was not confined to the Vedic age nor was its culture peculiar to that age. That is why the question whether the Hindu kings had any



definite policy in education betrays a basic ignorance. It was, of course, intended to be a leading question. If by his question the author of the official monograph meant that there was no system of education for the common people, well, the answer is both yes and no. Yes, because only the Brāhmaṇas, by their occupation, had the leisure and the competence to seek the highest truths of life; no, because their teachings did reach the common people and provided them with a philosophy of life. Besides this, there were media of popular instruction through the spoken word. I have already, in the preceding chapter, referred to the "charakas," the wandering teachers. The stories of the *Purāṇas*, the *Mahābhārata*, the *Rāmāyaṇa*, and the *Gītā* were a powerful medium of education for the common people. The discourses of the religious preachers used to command large and devoted audiences. The popular *yātrās* (folk dramas), songs and poems of the great *Sant* poets, the *Sādhaka* Poets, the Mystics, the *Bāuls*, held great fascination for the common mass of Indians. Their educative value for simple, unsophisticated, rustic people could not be over-emphasised.

If there was any lacuna in the system of education in the Vedic and post-Vedic era, the rise of Buddhism gave a great impetus to the spread of education and learning in the country. The State came generously to the help of the great seats of learning founded by Buddhist monks. Here again the question of an "educational policy" does not arise. There were the great preachers who carried the message of Buddhism to the remotest corners of India. The edicts of Asoka are a treasure house of wisdom. This was a missionary effort, with a human appeal, not a Royal method of public instruction. There was no compulsion, no bureaucratic direction to put education in a strait-jacket. Of course, it resulted in large sections of the people going without any formal education. The accent was on man's quest for the truths of life, for personal fulfilment. The common people learnt these truths at the feet of the great Masters. Religion and education were inextricably bound up in the popular mind. It can, however, be presumed that the common people, engaged in business or trade, knew the arts of their avocations. Otherwise how could Indian merchandise be traded across the seas? We have amazing evidences of Indian skill and workmanship in



various regions of Asia and Europe. How were these skills earned ? What formal education tries to do in modern times was done—and, perhaps, done more effectively—in the guild or trade schools as well as in family schools, in those days.

The lack of education of women in ancient India is another matter for criticism. Here again the question is one of relative value. The fact is that women had a sheltered existence in India and had their allotted task, at home, as a mother and wife, under a well-regulated social order. It would, however, be wrong to think of women like Gārgī and Maitreyī as exceptions which prove the general theory that the ordinary women in the ancient days were uneducated. They were, by formal standards, undoubtedly so. But what is education ? Women did receive the type of education that suited them for the station in life to which they were assigned. They were good mothers, devoted wives. What the Gārgīs and the Maitreyīs prove was that women in those days could rise to the highest positions in the world of learning on equal terms with men, if they wanted it. We have already cited the example of Saraswati Devi, wife of Mandana Misra. In those days there were not only the *Brahma-Vādinīs*, but also the *Paribrājikas* and *Siddha-Tōpasis*. We have also known of women adept in the art of archery, of women who guarded the court of Chandragupta, of the *Saktikis*, mentioned by Patanjali. Were all these exceptions ? But they were all products of their age.

III

The Present Imbalances

(a) THE CHANGING STATUS OF WOMEN

Let us now turn to the present age and try to find out, with reference to certain specific problems, the evaluation by our present-day educators of the modern approach towards education.

There have all along been strong differences of opinion as to the proper sphere of men's and women's education. Current opinion seems to favour the same type of education for men and women because, among other reasons, women have now come to a point when they have to face the struggle for life and existence in the same



manner as men. That, indeed, is one of the principal arguments in favour of co-education. And yet we still have in our own times special types of educational institutions meant for women where considerable emphasis is given to the teaching of Home Science and other subjects intended to equip women for their future role as wives and mothers. Now, in ancient India, the accent had all along been on securing social justice, not through the blind forces of competition, but through its replacement by co-operation and functional co-ordination. The place of the woman was in her home : as a daughter, as a wife and as a mother. It was her place of education as well as her place of work. And yet, as some of the inspiring examples of female scholarship in those times indicate, she was free to engage in the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake and in the search for the eternal verities of life, on equal terms with men. The circumstances of today have disturbed this social equilibrium and introduced, in the place of co-operation, the forces of competition and conflict, and produced deep psychological and social imbalances. Perhaps it is a changing society's effort to reach a new equilibrium of social forces.

The changing status of women, in our own times, has assumed a special significance ; it brought the light of a new awakening, against the backdrop of obscurity and reaction that had descended on and enveloped India for over 1000 years. Today, when India has attained her political freedom, it is necessary to look back to those days when she had attained the highest peaks of glory in the world of thought and wisdom, and to seek a new revaluation of our ideals of womanhood. Today women in India have earned a new sense of dignity, a new status. They are once again free to compete on equal terms with men in *every* field of activity. Thus a new sense of partnership has grown in which women do not allow themselves to be confined merely to household duties. At the same time, it is a competitive world they have entered upon. We have got women Ph.D.'s and women D.Sc.'s in the place of women condemned to do household chores, to act as cooks and as maids-of-all-work, throughout their lives. But these women scholars are even now proportionately as few as the women scholars of yester-year. What is more to the point is that the average girl in India is now receiving education to fit her for the competitive world as well as to play the role of better



mothers and better housewives. The opportunities for the fulfilment of her natural capacities are now almost as numerous as they are for the boys. They are the new Chitrāngadās of the Poet's conception, ready to stand by man to share his burden on the arduous path of life, no longer his plaything for his moments of leisure and recreation. They are everywhere "getting ready to take up the task of creating a new civilisation."

(b) CLASH OF CULTURES

In fact, in the average Indian household belonging to what is called the middle class, there is a contemporary evidence of a clash of the two systems of culture, ancient and modern. The grandmother, with her glasses on, reads the Rāmāyaṇa, while the granddaughter goes to play tennis in a mixed doubles match. The grandfather takes the bath in the Ganges and utters the "*Gāyatri*" for the *Sūrya pranām*, while the grandson, in drain-pipe trousers, is probably fixing a "date" with his girl-friend. Yes, values are changing, but unless there is a common, or absolute, or at any rate, an agreed standard of measurement, is it possible to compare these values? We have to take the totality of experience, without being selective to suit our own predilections, for comparison, if our value-judgment is to be fair, just and realistic. And, at the end, we shall find that each age has sought for the principle of harmony in social relations amidst the conflicts and tensions peculiar to that age, to achieve stability and at the same time to provide for the conditions of progress. Education is a process to guide man in identifying these two objectives. It is more than that, for its ultimate aim is to effect a harmony, a creative nexus between the world of matter and the world of spirit.

(c) IMBALANCE IN LITERACY

Even now, taking the educational system as a whole, we find glaring imbalances in several fields. Take, for instance, the percentage of literacy in India even after a century or more of the introduction of the Western type of education in India. According to the 1961 census, 33.9 per cent. of males and 12.8 per cent. of females were "literates". The overall literacy was 23.7 per cent. In a big State like the Uttar Pradesh in India, which has produced three successive



Prime Ministers, female literacy was 7.3 per cent. The author of "Government and Education" quotes Edward Terry, an Oxford graduate who visited India during the reign of Jehangir and who said that there was "little learning" among Indians, and also Bernier, the French Physician, as saying, "A gross and profound ignorance reigns in those States." Would these gentlemen, if they came to India in 1947, have gone wild with ecstasy at the state of education that they would find in India, after 200 years of British dominance? It is however to be noted that "literacy" is something very different from education.

(d) INADEQUACIES OF EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT

It was not till the Charter Act of 1813 that the East India Company was granted the princely sum of Rs. 1,00,000 for the support of oriental education and the promotion of Western Learning. Even this sum was not utilised till 1823. It was not till 1858 that the first batch of candidates appeared at the B.A. examination. Out of the 13 candidates who appeared only two passed. They were Bankimchandra Chatterjee and Jadunath Basu. Education was still meant for the élite and a promising job awaited those who passed. But even with efforts ranging over 150 years of British Rule, the percentage of literacy did not exceed 5 to 6 per cent. The masses were thus completely neglected.

It was in 1911, that G. K. Gokhale introduced his Bill providing for compulsory primary education. His aim was modest. The Bill was an enabling measure providing that a Provincial Government could make primary education compulsory if circumstances, in its opinion, were favourable in any area. But the move fell through due to the opposition of the Government of India. The spokesman for the Government, Sir Harcourt Butler, declared that there could be no question of making primary education compulsory as, in the opinion of the Government, the country was not prepared for it. So great was public dissatisfaction with this attitude of the Government that when King George V visited India in 1911 he announced the British Government's concern for the spread of education in this country for the welfare of the people. A sum of Rs. 50 lakhs was provided for education, of which a major portion was allocated to primary education. It was not, however, until the 'twenties of

the present century when, as the result of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms, education was included in the list of "transferred" subjects and placed under an elected Minister that the attention of the Government was turned to primary education. It was in 1920 that the first Primary Education Act was passed in Bengal. This Act was applicable to municipal areas only. Ten years later, in 1930, the Rural Primary Education Act was passed. It was in 1950 that the Constitution of India included a directive to make education free and compulsory up to the age of 14 years. India is still far from that target. And this results in a continuing and sharp imbalance between rural and urban areas in educational facilities.

Nor were the Government's efforts for the progress of higher education any more remarkable. The first Universities were established in 1857. Between 1857 to 1920, only 4 more Universities were established, while between 1920 to 1930 the number increased by ten. It was only after independence that centres of higher education have multiplied at a very rapid rate, the total number of Universities as reported by the University Grants Commission (1963-64) was 61, with Uttar Pradesh leading with 9 Universities and Madhya Pradesh a close second with 7 Universities. In fact, so rapid has been the increase in numbers that even the U.G.C. has recently been feeling a little uneasy. Of the total enrolment, only 5.5 per cent. are in the post-graduate classes.

These figures will be subject to a further study in subsequent chapters. The point that I am trying to emphasise now is that our efforts at revaluation of our educational system, whether at the elementary stage or at the University stage, are comparatively recent and that it has still to cover the most significant years of a child's life. The percentage of students attending primary classes, as every educationist knows, is illusory for barely 20 per cent. of those who are enrolled in the first year of these classes continue up to class V and practically all of them who do not continue relapse to illiteracy.¹ Of the age-group 11-14, only 26.6 per cent. and of the age group 14-17, only about 15.6 per cent. are attending schools. (These are not actual figures, but estimates for 1965-66 the actual percentage

¹ See also *Report of the Education Commission* (1964-66), pp. 156-57.



for 1960-61 being 22.6 and 10.6 respectively for the two age-groups.) The figures show that practice has not yet matched ssions.

There is no doubt that the period of transition when one era ends and another is struggling to be born is always difficult. When the process involves a radical change in values, it becomes still more difficult. In fact, the change in values reflects the period of transition which began with British Rule. The figures which underline our educational backwardness even at the present time and the serious imbalances that still continue to afflict our educational system, are the long-drawn effects of that Rule, the product of British policy over the years. We shall conclude this chapter with a brief reference to the early days of British educational policy in India when Rammohun Roy, the highpriest of India in transition from a medieval to a modern country, fought the British on their own terms, in a desperate bid for survival from religious bigotry and obscurantism and to step on to an era of progress and enlightenment.

IV

A Classic Fight—Rammohun Roy

It was a curious anomaly of British administration in India that when Imperial interests so required it could take drastic measures, irrespective of what the people might think, for safeguarding its own interests, but when these were not directly involved, it allowed all sorts of obscurantist and medieval ideas and practices, of ultra-conservative reaction and vested interests, to continue and flourish on the principle of non-intervention. In the early days of British Rule, the rulers thought that they would not interfere with the indigenous system of education. On the other hand, when they realised that a class of Indians educated in English would be helpful to their Imperial interests, they did not hesitate to change their policy and impose Western education in India. It was given to Rammohun Roy (1772-1833) and a small group of his supporters to fight the British and the citadels of Indian orthodoxy to bring the benefits of European culture and enlightenment to India. As in the social

sphere, so also in India's educational history, Rammohun initiated, according to his own light, and in the context of his own times, a revolutionary movement, at once social and educational, that laid the foundations of modern India. A man deeply versed in Eastern lore as well as Western scholarship, Rammohun stood up, without regard for his personal comfort or happiness, for what he considered to be truth and justice, and paid the extreme penalty for his unorthodox role. Disowned by his own family and ostracised by society, he died a broken man in Bristol two years before the famous Minute of Lord Macaulay was drafted which formed the basis of the Government policy for education whereby the English system was foisted on India in complete displacement of the Indian system.

It is not known what would have happened if the Anglicists, by which the supporters of English education in India were known, had lost the fight against the Orientalists. Even now there are remnants of the old orthodoxy who deplore India's choice in that eventful period of Indian educational history. Even now, English education has touched only a fringe of India's huge population. Accordingly, the activities of Rammohun and his fellow Anglicists had to be appreciated in the background of the then existing conditions. On the one hand, there was the call of the West. Pitted against it was the pull of a medieval, theocratic India where the letter of the ancient shastric injunctions counted more than their spirit in all disputations and where the most inhuman atrocities were perpetrated in the false name of religion. What was to be the choice and how was it to be determined ?

Here was Rammohun equally at home with the literature, the philosophy and the traditions of the Western world, as well as with the sacred books of the East (of which he published translations for the benefit of those who did not know Sanskrit) ; here was a man who combined a deep respect for the fundamentals of the Hindu religion with intolerance of all that was obscurantist in character in the practice of that religion : a man who was moved by a missionary zeal to rescue India from her slavery to a dead past, when the priestly orthodoxy was engaged with " grammatical niceties and metaphysical distinctions of little or no practical use to the possessors or to society ", or even went so far as to distort Hindu religious texts



to suit their purpose.² He wanted to inform Indian society with purposeful living free from dogma and cant, its mind free to receive the best that the West could offer, and that, he sincerely believed, could be done through English liberal education.

In carrying on this single-handed crusade, Rammohun combined in himself the protestant spirit of the kind that had moved Europe during two centuries of her eventful history with the ardour of a revolutionary humanist. Just as the Renaissance in Europe is used to describe both a period of history and a development of human thought and interest, two centuries later a similar wave struck the shores of India, with Rammohun as the harbinger of the new message. So also the spirit of the Reformation, though on a somewhat lesser scale, inspired Rammohun's rebellion against the orthodoxy of the Hindu priesthood which sowed the seeds that gradually sprouted into a big religious, social and intellectual upheaval destined to change the face of India in the course of a century and a half. The Brahmo Samaj movement represented the religious side of the protest of the Indian reformers ; but the accent was on the social and intellectual movements. These were later on to bring off an Indian renaissance. It was seen in the establishment of Universities and higher centres of learning, in social movements such as the abolition of the *Sati* and widow remarriage, and in a general re-appraisal of ancient values. This, in turn, awakened a new and enlightened interest in the understanding of our ancient Indian literature and philosophy, specially in the Sanskrit classics free from dogmatic approach, of which men like Sivanath Shastri, Maharshi Devendranath, and last but not least, Rabindranath, were the main exponents. Like Petrarch who, in spite of his reputation as an orthodox medieval thinker, was regarded by the leaders of the Renaissance as a "humanist," and believed, above everything else, in the dignity of human intellect and in the necessity of bringing the intellectual and volitional powers to bear upon the whole heritage

² Thus, referring to the practice of *Sati*, orientalists of world-wide reputation like Wilson and Max Müller maintained that the one line in the *Rig Veda* which had been held to enjoin *Sati* (*i.e.*, burning of the widow on the same funeral pyre with the husband) was a deliberate distortion—" perhaps the most flagrant instance of what can be done by an unscrupulous priesthood."—Natarajan : *Social Reform in India*, p. 36.

of the past, secular as well as sacred, Rammohun also combined, in his character, the forces of an enlightened humanism tempered by regard for Hindu traditionalism. That was why, while subscribing to all that is best and noble in Christian thought he refused baptism and thereby alienated a section of his European missionary friends and, though opposed to caste distinctions, refrained from admitting any but Brahmins to the recitations of the Vedas and the Upanishads.² Well, we should judge Rammohun by the totality of the impact he made on Indian society. The Brahmo Samaj later on attempted a reconciliation of Hinduism with humanism, of which, again, the beginnings were laid by Rammohun. His experiments with new religious societies culminating in the establishment of the Brahmo Samaj (1828) got him into constant trouble and friction with the citadels of orthodoxy. Ultimately he was excommunicated by his brother's son.

Well, this short description of a magnificent personality is, I believe, sufficient to bring out the fighter, the challenger, in Rammohun. In the sphere of education also—perhaps more than in any other field—he accepted one of the most powerful challenges of his time. The Hindoo College, established on January 20, 1817, was his answer to this challenge.

V

Advent of English Education

It is useful to recall that when the British came to India, there were two types of schools open to the Hindus—the indigenous primary schools teaching very little beyond the mother tongue and simple arithmetic, and the Sanskrit *Tols* in which pupils studied Sanskrit grammar and literature, theology, logic and metaphysics. The former were so ill-equipped and the syllabus of studies so elementary that they did not attract any serious consideration from people anxious for educational reconstruction. In fact, it was not till the viceroyalty of Lord Ripon that "serious consideration of the Government" was given to the reconstruction of primary education under the

² Vide Natarajan : *Social Reform in India*, p. 40.



guidance of self-governing rural authorities. Until that was done, the rural schools carried on their precarious existence : precarious, because in the new political set-up, they were not favoured with any official support.

Apart from the village primary schools (called *pāthāśālās*) there were centres of higher learning. These were the *Tols* for the Hindus and the *Maktabs* and *Madrassas* for the Muslims. These were the centres where the classics (Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian) were taught and discussed. Even Hindus learnt Arabic and Persian for their job value. Persian was the Court language. These institutions imparted free education, being financially supported by the Government or private donations. The Brahmin teachers got gifts of (*Brahmottar*) land and got generous donations on the occasion of festivals and other ceremonial functions (in cash and kind), while the students, in addition to free tuition, got free board and lodging with their teachers. With an average income of Rs. 5 to Rs. 6 per month supplemented by payments in kind on ceremonial occasions, the teachers who were content to live a frugal life were quite happy with their studies and students. They never thought of " selling " education or making a business of it. While many who learned Arabic or Persian did it for securing service under the Royal Court, most of the others studied for the sake of knowledge and intellectual advancement. The rest studied to follow the profession of priests or teachers. Judged by modern standards, however, the syllabus would be regarded as singularly inadequate. That was the reason why the need for reform was felt by people who had received the Western type of education. Yet the system of rural education with its *pāthāśālās*—there being as many as five or six of them in the larger villages—attended by both Hindu and Muslim children—and the *Tols* and the *Maktabs*, was peculiarly suited to the needs of those days and formed an integral part of village life a century and half ago. It is stated that in Bengal (which at that time included Bihar and a part of Orissa—Anga, Banga and Kalinga), there were as many as 100,000 *pāthāśālās*.

It was the decadence of India's rural economy that was responsible for the chaotic condition of education in India at the turn of the nineteenth century. British power superseded the Muslim Court. The study of Arabic and Persian ceased to enjoy Government patron-

nage. The British Rulers had no attraction for the *tols* and the *madrassas*. They just did not bother about the village schools. At the same time, they not only showed singular aversion to the adoption of any policy that would smack of interference with the religion, social system or education of the natives, they followed a policy of limited appeasement of the local population to get their political support. May be, the liberal policy of *laissez faire* in the field of social reform or educational reconstruction was also at work. They established a Madrassa in Calcutta, and to match, a Sanskrit College at Banaras. These produced the Maulavis to interpret Muhammadan Law and the Pandits to interpret Hindu Law for the benefit of the European Judges. It was this policy of non-interference that Rammohun had to contend with, along with the forces of Hindu orthodoxy, when he was carrying on the crusade against the *Sati*. It was this policy, again, which left the main initiative for introducing Western type of education on the Indian soil to non-official effort. So sensitive was the East India Company to this principle of neutrality that they had even warned the Christian missionaries against their proselytising activities with the result that some of them decided to operate from Dutch settlements in India where they established schools and colleges.

Though the East India Company officially stood aloof from interfering with the social and educational activities of the native population, non-official Europeans joined hands with Indian leaders in the attempt to propagate Western education in India. Rammohun was the acknowledged leader of the Indian group. This effort, far-seeing in its aims and objectives, was, in reality, a national movement, in the best sense of the word, a spiritual call, as Renan would say, for the uplift of a whole people.

VI

The Hindoo College, a New Landmark

The college that was opened in a rented building at Garanhatta (afterwards 304, Chitpore Road) on January 20, 1817, was symbolic of the awakening of India into a new future. It was a new landmark. Babu Buddinath Mukherjee, Secretary of the Committee that laboured to bring this college into existence, made the prophecy



that the institution "which yet was but a seedling, would many years hence resemble the *bur* tree which, when fully grown, was the largest of trees in India, cooling and refreshing all those who came under its shade." It is interesting to note how the idea originated with only two persons who, in 1815, were in consultation as to what should be done to elevate native mind and character. They were David Hare, a watch-maker of Calcutta but "a man of great energy and strong practical sense". The other was Rammohun Roy, "a Brahmin of Calcutta....well-known for his intelligence among the principal native inhabitants and also intimate with many of our own gentlemen of distinction" (in the words of Sir Edward Hyde East, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court). Sir Edward and Dr. Alexander Duff also joined in the plans to set up an English institution. A Committee called the Hindu College Committee was formed with Sir Edward as Chairman, Joseph Baretto as Treasurer and Buddinath Mukherjee as Secretary. Because of the opposition of some of the more orthodox patrons of the scheme to the inclusion of Rammohun in the Committee on the alleged ground that he had insulted the Hindu religion, the latter had to keep out of the Committee. Some of these patrons had somehow got the idea that the real purpose of establishing the College was to convert the Indian people to Christianity and one of them frankly told Hyde East that he supposed there was no intention to change his religion. The Committee raised a sum of Rs. 1,13,179, the principal donors being Maharaja Tejchand Bahadur of Burdwan and Gopee Mohun Tagore, each of whom contributed Rs. 10,000 to the funds. The college started with 20 students, who received free tuition; the number rose to 69 within a few months. The funds did not last long and the College was soon in difficulties. The managers of the College, on the advice of David Hare, approached the Government for help. The Government agreed subject to the stipulation, among others, that it would exercise a supervisory control through the General Committee of Public Instruction. Horace Hayman Wilson, Secretary to the General Committee and himself a reputed Sanskrit scholar, was appointed the first Visitor. Thus the Government was drawn into active participation in the cause of English education. The College, subsequently known as Hindoo College, was at first called the "Hindoo Vidyalaya" or "Hindoo Mahavidyalaya" and that it had originally two sec-

tions, namely, a school (*pāthasāla*) which imparted instruction in English, Bengali, Grammar and Arithmetic, and a College (*Mahā-pāthasālā*) teaching, besides the languages, History, Geography, Chronology, Astronomy, Mathematics, Chemistry and other sciences.⁴ It is interesting to note that in its issue of January 17, 1828, the *Calcutta Gazette* defined the purpose of the College in the following words : "to teach Bengali youths to read and relish English literature ; to store their minds with the facts of history and science ; and to enable them to express just conclusions in a clear and polished style : founded upon a comprehensive view of the constitution of society and the phenomena of nature".

After this, institutions for imparting English education multiplied. Missionaries took the lead and students flocked in growing numbers to these schools. In 1967, the Hindoo College completed 150 years of its existence. Today, in free India, a sizable section of the Indian intelligentsia is voluntarily clamouring for the retention of English as the official language of India. It should have been a great day for Macaulay who before he came out to India had made a historic, and at the same time a prophetic, declaration about the effects in India of the introduction of the English system of education :

" Are we to keep the people of India ignorant in order that we may keep them submissive ? Or do we think that we can give knowledge without awakening ambition ? Or do we mean to awaken ambition and to provide it with no legitimate vent ?..... It may be that the public mind of India may expand under our system until it has outgrown that system, that by good government we may educate our subjects into a capacity of better government, that having become instructed in European knowledge, they may, in some future age, demand European institutions. Whether such a day will ever come I know not. Whenever it comes, it will be the proudest day in English History..... The sceptre may pass away from us. Victory may be inconstant to our arms. But there are triumphs which are followed by no reverse. There is an empire exempt from all natural causes of decay. These triumphs are the pacific triumphs of reason over barbarism : that empire is the imperishable empire of our arts and our morals, our literature and our laws."

Educated Indians have bowed gratefully to the majesty of this great empire of thought though they have fought tooth and nail against

* Much of the material regarding the Hindoo College is to be found in the *Presidency College Centenary Volume* (1955) and *Hundred Years of the University of Calcutta* (1857-1956).



the continuance of India's subjection to British political power. Her own Constitution today is largely modelled after European institutions. She has written the ideas of Equality, Liberty and Fraternity into her Constitution. She has accepted democratic socialism as the goal of her society. These are ideas borrowed from Europe and assimilated to Indian conditions. The foundations for all these were laid about 150 years ago.

Macaulay stands vindicated at the bar of history. But were the British people, particularly those who came out to rule India, equally sincere, equally loyal to the great ideal propounded by the British statesman ? Why did India take more than a century since Macaulay's declaration to outgrow the system ? How is it, one may justifiably ask, that it took the country nearly forty years after the foundation of the Hindoo College to establish the first University and that during the next sixty years, that is, between 1857 and 1915, only one more University could be established ? British rulers, with all their enlightenment and progressive outlook, possibly thought that with the rising tide of Indian nationalism and the gradual spread of disaffection towards British Rule, Imperial interests required that caution should be exercised against too rapid an expansion of Western education and enlightenment among the peoples of India ; for it was Western learning and history which had provided their leaders with the ammunition that was being increasingly used to bring " the proudest day in English History " so uncomfortably near the inevitable doom of British bureaucratic rule in India. One may well imagine how allergic that regime had become to the prophetic utterances of a Macaulay or the noble, inspiring words of a John Stuart Mill.



CHAPTER V

EDUCATIONAL VALUES IN MODERN INDIA

I

A Search for Values

If the history of modern education in India starts with the Government of India's Resolution of March 7, 1835, it completed its first century with the establishment of Provincial Autonomy under the Government of India Act of 1935 under which Education came completely under the control of Indian Ministers of Education in the Provinces. Prior to that, under the Act of 1919, Education had been transferred to Provincial Governments in India and placed under the care of a Minister in each province under the system of Dyarchy. But while a Minister under Dyarchy enjoyed a limited control over his department (since Finance continued to be a subject reserved to the Governor-in-Council), a Minister under the Act of 1935 enjoyed full responsibility except to the extent that the Governor of the province was vested with certain special responsibilities and discretionary powers. Fifteen years later, the people of India gave to themselves a Constitution creating a Sovereign Democratic Republic, with a Parliamentary system of Government. Two years before this memorable event, in 1948, a Commission headed by Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan had surveyed the entire field of higher education in India and produced the first blueprint of Indian education meant for free India. Five years later, Lakshmanaswami Mudaliar headed another Commission which made a detailed survey of the field of secondary education in India in all its aspects. This has since been followed by the report, submitted in 1966, of another high-powered Commission which was named the Education Commission, under the chairmanship of D. S. Kothari, and which has surveyed the entire field of education, from A to Z, that is, from pre-school to the highest stages of education, in all their aspects, producing as nearly as possible a complete Plan of educational reconstruction in India.



These efforts, in their totality, underline the seriousness of purpose with which the Government of India, assisted by a distinguished team of Indian educationists in each case, and with the collaboration of foreign experts, have set about the task of re-organizing the entire educational pattern of the country in the interests of the nation. In fact, the Kothari Commission's Report bears the legend : " Education and National Development." Thus it took more than a century after the introduction of English education in India for England to usher in, in the fulness of time, and in the words of Macaulay, " the proudest day in English history ". The Indian leadership, instructed in European knowledge, demanded and got European institutions, nor merely in the shape of Western Parliamentary apparatus but the Western type of education. This preference for Western values and Western ideals inspire Indian efforts in the field of politics as in that of education.

There is one important deviation, perhaps, from this general line, in so far as English, the main vehicle of European culture and civilization, is now going to lose its position of primacy in the Indian educational system. I do not know if this would have given a jolt to Macaulay if he had been alive, for in a sense this also is a logical process of development. That the country should be strong and united enough to demand and get a government of its own and that it would, of its own free will, write a Constitution modelled on Western institutions, are as logical an outcome of India's political maturity, her fitness in assuming the responsibilities of Government in her own strong hands, as the decision to develop a national language of her own. It is as much an expression of her own national sovereignty as of her national identity. There may be, as there are, differences of opinion on the practical wisdom of her language policy that is under pressure to oust English. That a strong volume of opinion exists in India against this policy is one more evidence of the fact that English as the symbol of Western ideals and values is still very much alive and active.

This is, however, only one side of the shield. There is the other side of the shield which points to a restless world, in India as elsewhere. Our education, in the larger sense, has been the result of a continuing contact not merely in the intercourse of ideas and thoughts, but in ways of life and living, with the West. It was a question

of time when the challenging spirit of the twentieth century and the two World Wars would help to bring about a new interpretation of this contact. The Swadeshi agitation in India compelled the Indian people to look inward and set in train a revivalist movement. She was, as it were, searching for her lost soul. Subsequent events shook the faith of the people in the hallmarks of Western culture and civilization still further. The image of a brutalised Europe shattered many illusions. Loyalty and allegiance to ideas and ideals was replaced by a questioning spirit. The Wars further saw a mortal clash of traditional values ; so did the national movement in India in the zenith of its fury. In the hour of victory, whichever side wins, there may be defeat, for there is no knowing that the right cause will always win. Even the faith that it will win ultimately is eroded in the wake of a long-continued frustration that paralyses the springs of action—until, some day, another revolution bursts in upon the world as in 1789 or in 1917. The twentieth century is the century of agnosticism, of a lack of faith, in spite of, or perhaps *because of*, the stupendous material advancement that it has registered. This state of things cannot be accepted as the reflection of reason. Every value becomes suspect, every belief a heresy.

In India, too, we have an angry generation and a road of doubt and uncertainty before them. The sheltered sacred order of ancient India has passed away in the procession of years. So have many of the pet dreams of youth. Psychologists would say that no man, far less a generation, can exist for long in a state of utter disbelief of everything, not to speak of an indefinite suspense of belief. Hence this generation picks up anything that glitters on the way and perhaps throws it away the next moment, disgusted. In this way it exchanges one experience for another, never settling down to any task that may come its way. The violent conduct in which a frustrated young man indulges in a moment of despair or in a moment of utter vacuity makes of society a mere scapegoat while it is in reality directed against himself. He becomes the first victim of his own aggressive spirit. This loss of faith, on the one hand, and of reason, on the other, which has been raised almost to a cult, to a way of thinking and living, is the greatest challenge that the educational planners of modern India will have to face, for it is a spiritual crisis that we are up against.



II

India Looks to West

This spiritual crisis is causing deep anxiety, though compared to Europe or America, the proportion of the Indian intelligentsia who are caught in the crisis is not yet a significant proportion of our total population. But there need be no complacence on this score. If 50 per cent of the population of this country consist of young persons of 18 or less, there is an explosive material at hand which, merely because most of them are not yet able to articulate their feelings, should not be left out of account on the ground of their present ineffectiveness. Already there is a striking evidence of a revolt against entrenched values in the results of the last General Elections (1966) in India. The voters were people of 21 and over in age. Unless things straighten up a little and society is able to fulfil its promise of a better deal to the youth of our country, the generations following will be still more difficult to deal with. We are already witnessing teen-agers participating in street riots ; young students leaving their classes on the slightest pretext ; examinees indulging in all manner of malpractices and breaches of discipline ; making heroes of those who can successfully defy authority in executing their nefarious designs. And yet, in spite of all these disturbing signs, or rather because of the same, education must spread and spread rapidly. This is required not only for the rehabilitation of frustrated youth who are a part of the frustrated community but for national reconstruction on the basis of ideals and objectives that have, in the modern world, contributed to the greatness and power of a people.

In this respect, developing countries have a lot to learn, in the matter of educational development, from the other forward-looking countries of the world. No doubt India has had her own traditions but these must now harmonise with the modern conditions of living. The new outlook has vastly changed the patterns of education so that the intellectual landscape has been changed almost beyond recognition. We shall see how theories of education have changed, particularly in the realm of child education and of the education of teachers, in which new values have been set forth. The community now takes responsibility even for the pre-school education of the

child and for the training of his teacher. The emphasis on education in science and technology is clearly impressed on the educational patterns of all leading countries, whether of the East or of the West. The role of education in the development of the student's character, his initiative and his sense of responsibility is now fully recognised, and faculty-student co-operation in activity programmes has led to a new sense of discipline. Under the old traditional system, discipline worked one way, namely, the teacher commanding and the student obeying. Discipline today recognizes the personality of the student who is to be helped to develop the qualities of his character to fit him for his future role as a citizen of a democratic country. The confrontation of the teacher and the taught is not yet so direct as it was in ancient India but a large extension of teacher-pupil contacts within and off the campus has greatly compensated for the formality of the class room atmosphere. The system of house tutors and wardens has added a certain amount of depth to these relationships. Vocational courses, summer schools, seminars, joint excursions etc. have expanded the range of such relationships for those who want to make use of such methods of education. These developments in the theory and practice of education in progressive countries are pointers to a new way of thinking.

So far as the teaching profession is concerned, there is now, in all progressive countries, an increasing recognition of the teacher's status in society. Not only does the teacher enjoy better emoluments, but more rational conditions of work which would give him ample leisure for advanced study and research. This is helped by well-equipped libraries attached to colleges and universities and also publicly endowed. The more distinguished members of different faculties are often called upon to assist the Government or big private organizations with expert advice or for top-level consultations. Important projects of research or surveys by individual professors or by a team of such are often financed from public or corporate funds. The governments of these countries do not need to depend exclusively on their own officers for solution of problems that require special knowledge or technical competence but frequently turn to the Universities for help and guidance. This has also given the teachers an opportunity of enriching their academic knowledge with practical experience, a sense of personal res-

ponsibility for what they teach and what they write so that their lectures as well as their published work ultimately command a clientele far beyond the confines of the University campus.

One result of this is an increasing tendency towards specialisation that characterises modern systems of education. The very large faculties which some universities and colleges maintain bear evidence of such specialisation, which, if unchecked, comes very near to justifying the quip that specialisation means knowing more and more about less and less. There is, however, no doubt that specialisation has its necessity as well as its advantages. At a time when the bounds of knowledge are daily expanding beyond the wildest expectations of previous generations, specialisation becomes an unavoidable necessity. Even then, it becomes a life-long task. It is through such specialisation that knowledge as a whole has been able to make such a striking progress in the present century. Further, a student working on a difficult problem and in doubt, or a doctor in charge of a difficult case, or a technician working on a difficult part of a project, and all in need of specialist advice, will know exactly whom to turn to for such advice, for a solution of their respective difficulties. The disadvantage of specialisation is not that it produces myopic Pundits —that would be going too far—but that the inter-disciplinary character of knowledge is often lost sight of, resulting sometimes in unbalanced progress. Fortunately, the attention of our educational planners has been drawn to this aspect of the problem. Thus, while the Mudaliar Commission had recommended the institution of specialised "streams" at the end of the lower secondary course, the Kothari Commission has set its face against such early attempts at specialisation. The latter has rather gone to the other extreme of introducing science subjects such as physics, chemistry and geology in class V, biology in class VI and astronomy in class VII. It is better that these subjects should be dispensed with rather than they should be taught unimaginatively. I am not sure how many teachers of the calibre of Ramendra Sundar Trivedi or Jagadananda Ray, or Charuchandra Bhattacharya we shall get for teaching science in the only manner in which it is possible to teach it in these junior classes. But the idea is worth trying, perhaps in a few experimental schools. Tagore had tried with some success but then the atmosphere, the facilities, the natural

surroundings that characterised Santiniketan, transformed by the genius of Tagore himself, can hardly be paralleled elsewhere in India, except, perhaps, in small isolated pockets of the country-side though, even in that case, the difficulty of finding suitable teachers able to interest the little children will possibly remain unsolved. Perhaps these separate sciences which the Education Commission want to introduce in the elementary (lower secondary) classes can be synthesised into a comprehensive Nature Study or General Science course. That may fit in with the idea of an inter-disciplinary approach. I would suggest this approach be continued right up to the end of the secondary course, that is, up to and including class X, with composite courses of natural and field sciences. Such a programme, if intelligently followed, will serve in later years not only as a general background for subsequent specialisation, but also as a corrective for over-specialisation. In fact, even in the higher (Honours or post-graduate) courses of study, the inter-dependence of certain disciplines cannot be ignored.

III

Science and Education

As the future progress of India depends on rapid industrialisation *pari passu* with the strengthening of the agricultural base of the economy, which, in either case, depends on the increasing application of science and technology, the study of science, in both its pure and applied aspects, has also to be stepped up as a matter of immediate policy. The range and the quality of such education have also to be considered. While the Education Commission has made important recommendations as to the steps to be taken and the "action programmes" to be implemented for this purpose, it is necessary that these should be carefully examined and co-ordinated by such bodies as the Indian Council of Agricultural Research, the Council of Industrial and Scientific Research, the All-India Council of Technical Education or any other organization that may be proposed as a substitute. There is already among our young persons seeking higher education a clear preference for science education. There is also a growing output of significant



research work. The larger industrial organizations of the country are becoming increasingly aware of the importance and, indeed, the sheer necessity of having well-manned research departments to keep up to date in their respective lines of production. This recognition of the importance of science and technology is no doubt inspired by Western achievements in these fields and the compulsion of the Indian situation. International co-operation in scientific research is now an accepted fact. The rapid progress of scientific knowledge—too rapid in the view of some humanists—has set the pace for education and science as well as for specialisation.¹ The Education Commission anticipates that “a decade from now, the volume of new knowledge gained will equal nearly that accumulated over the past several centuries.” As an instance, it points out that about a hundred years ago the total number of “Science journals” was about 1000 ; today it is 100,000 ; by the end of the present century it is expected to reach 1,000,000. Will the scientific personnel increase at the same, or even nearly the same rate ? Will new employments be able to keep pace with that rate ?

The question does not require any answer at the present stage of development in India. India faces large possibilities of scientific and technological development. What is causing concern is not merely the inadequacy of science education in India. We are facing at the same time a serious imbalance between our production of scientists, engineers and technologists and our exact manpower needs as the development of the country proceeds. There are already disquieting signs of mounting unemployment among persons possessing middle-level talent and, more particularly, among our fresh graduates. There are also frequent references to the “brain drain”—that is, to the fact of qualified scientific personnel and specialists of India going abroad for jobs and not wanting to return to India. While the Kothari Commission rightly considers it “most desirable” that “a small proportion of *young talent* gets an opportunity for advanced study and research at world-famous centres abroad”, the

¹ A study of such indices as the output of research papers or the number of scientists and engineers or the consumption of energy indicate the “doubling” period of science and activities related to science as some 10 to 15 years. Is there a Malthusian Law of the growth of the scientific family and does it require any curbs ?

problem becomes different when, as the Commission itself admits, while it has no precise estimate of the number who go abroad and tend to stay indefinitely, "a sizeable number accept foreign nationality". Of all the foreign students studying in American colleges and universities (1964-65), India with 6813 students stood second only to Canada (9253), while among foreign citizens serving as faculty members (teachers) or holding research appointments. India was third only to the U.K., and Japan. Of the 6813 Indian students in the U.S.A. as many as 2880 were studying engineering as against only 285 studying medical sciences and 322 agriculture. Other fields of interest were social sciences (690) and humanities (455) while physical and cultural sciences attracted 1561 students. These, of course, do not strictly speaking constitute "brain-drain," except in so far as some of them may choose to stay back. A recent survey by Kamalesh Ray² of the problem of India's "Absentee (Scientific) Manpower" refers to the "estimated number (source not stated) of India's overseas scientific and technical personnel" as only 4 per cent or 5 per cent of "the total stock of such personnel produced in India," while in absolute number about 20,000 such persons are currently abroad. This, of course, is "a sizeable number". But Ray points out that India is now producing 30,000 engineering and medical graduates and scientists with post-graduate degrees, and argues that if this figure shows a surplus, and it is "positively established," it would be wrong to say that only those who are abroad are surplus to our requirements.

Apart from the hypothetical nature of this conclusion, the issue is not so clear-cut as it is suggested. It is misleading to talk of an overall surplus of scientific manpower, especially if we lump together such diverse professional categories such as engineers, doctors and architects ; in one case, there may be a surplus ; in another, a shortage. Ultimately, the question resolves itself into that of locating the shortage and of whether Indians possessing the necessary skills and competence and having had specialised training abroad are hesitant to come back to India and why. Secondly, even when a particular profession is over-crowded, it may have been filled with a large number of medio-

² See article on "Utilising India's Absentee Manpower" by Kamalesh Ray in *The Statesman*, August 1, 1967.



cities, with a serious shortage of specialists, or experts, or of men with international experience and reputation. The fact that we have to entertain the highly-paid services of foreign experts, often against considerable drain of foreign exchange, shows that there is always room at the top. And why should there not be, in view of the rapidly expanding demand for experts in different kinds of projects covered by India's vast network of developmental plans on which the nation is engaged? A carefully collected roster of Indian experts now living abroad may show the exact extent of such brain-drain instead of depending on generalised statistics. These experts may even be informally contacted through our embassies and specialised agencies abroad and the causes of their reluctance in coming back to their home country carefully considered. Such interviews may be highly revealing in so far as they may throw light on some of the undisclosed bottlenecks that are operating as a dis-incentive in the way of qualified Indians who have settled abroad and who may sooner or later acquire foreign nationality.

The close connection between science, technology and the occupational pattern of a country is a characteristic of the modern socio-economic system. It produces new class relations, new social attitudes. The technocrat is the new Brahminic class. His word is law and the society will offer him its unquestioning obeisance. But the analogy need not be pushed too far. We are now irrevocably committed to the age of science and we must make the most of it. We cannot get away from the fact that science is not merely for the scientist, it must now become part of the general education of our children, for the world in which they are going to be brought up is to be increasingly science-based and mechanised in every field of human activity. It is an electronic civilization which is round the corner. It is an atomic age which is dawning upon the world, and India, along with the rest of the world, cannot escape the inevitable involvement.

Science started with the instinctive commitment of man to free enquiry, freed from the shackles of traditional belief. It promotes an active interest in life instead of an attitude of passive resignation to Fate. "*Klaivyam mi gama, Pārtha,*" says the Gita. There is no greater *Klaivya* (impotency) than that induced by adherence to dogma and superstition. So far as the fundamentals of education are concerned,

the Indian sacred texts also reflected man's search for Truth. That also is the compulsion of the scientist. "By its emphasis on reason and free enquiry" writes the Education Commission, "it even helps to lessen ideological tensions which often arise because of adherence to dogma and fanaticism". It even goes farther when it claims that the development of science "is tending more and more to help man to understand himself and his place in the universe."⁸ Does it not seem to be an echo of the *Upanishads*? *Ātmānam Viddhi* was also the injunction of our Sages. But the paths were different.

That brings one back again to the realities of the situation. The deficiencies of our *present* system of education have to be assessed in modern terms. The imbalances that impede the realisation of the maximum gain from our educational effort have to be studied, if possible, to attain a reconciliation of our past and present ideals. A new reconstruction of educational theory is called for.

IV

Science or Humanities ?

If the attainment of spiritual excellence was the aim of education in ancient India, the present system of education in India has lost that divine spark. Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan, himself a great modern scholar, recalls the ancient Indian wisdom according to which the chief purpose of education was not the acquisition of skills and information only but to qualify for initiation into a higher life. Swami Vivekananda, the prophet of modern India, spoke of education as "the manifestation of the perfection, already in man." Even Jawaharlal Nehru, the votary of modern science and technology, would combine science with spirituality, and would want education "to deal with moral and ethical standards though it does not teach any specific religion as such." Mahatma Gandhi meant by education "an all-round drawing out of the best in child and man—body,

⁸ Education Commission (1964-66) Report, p. 6.

mind and spirit." The present system of education neglects this task. Repeated surveys of the health of our student community bear ample testimony to the alarming state of their physical condition. And so far as the moral and spiritual side of the educational process is concerned, it still occupies a position of low priority in our educational planning.

In India, the educational courses make a sharp differentiation between the Humanities and the Sciences. The separation of these two courses beginning at the higher secondary stage in many of the States suggests their mutual irreconcilability. That is to say, the curricula beginning from class IX (under the higher secondary system) to the highest levels of University education are based on a distinct division between different "streams" of knowledge, or between arts and science, as well as technical and vocational courses. In the University courses, Arts subjects are usually banished from the B.Sc. courses. Correspondingly, the Arts courses fight shy of Science subjects. This poses an "either-or" type of choice before our students without any requirement of aptitude testing. This ultimately leads to a great deal of waste because of initially wrong choice of courses.

Modern educational opinion does not think much of such rigidities of choice. Apart from the incompleteness of the training thus bifurcated, the courses suffer glaringly in their employment potential. The premium that is now placed on a Science degree is tending to divert our more promising students from their early high school career to the so-called science stream, and later on to extreme scientific specialisation. The second best—or the third best—the residual element (remaining after the Science classes are filled up)—would take to the Arts courses. The situation which every Principal of a College has to face during the admission weeks is further complicated, as already stated, by the absence of aptitude testing or student counselling at the school or the University stages. There has, however, been some recognition in recent years for an integrated course. The Indian Institutes of Technology as well as the Engineering (degree) Colleges have provided for the teaching of the Humanities along with the professional subjects as evidence of this desire to provide for an integrated course. The Education Commission has also emphasised the necessity of composite courses.

*Women's Education*

One of the most characteristic expressions of a modern outlook on education is the active interest that India has been taking in the spread of women's education. We have seen how in ancient India women rose to the highest positions in the world of learning and women scholars vied on equal terms with their male counterparts. This, of course, does not mean that all women were eligible for the highest education any more than men were. Housewives were, however, trained in the domestic arts, not in formal schools, but much more effectively in the informal school of the home, from the mother, the grand-mother or other women relatives. Women could write letters, compose songs ; they learnt the art of beautifying and adorning the body, decorating the home, and lull the children with excellent nursery rhymes. As there was no printing press, palm-leaf manuscripts did the duty, or else, learning spread from mouth to mouth. By and large, since formal education of an academic type was not available to ordinary men, women were even more outside its pale. If they were educated at all, they were educated in the art of homekeeping and in that process learnt something of plants and flowers as well as animal care. Most households tended cattle and had a small dairy that yielded butter, ghee and *khir*.

Even then during the medieval period of Indian history right up to the beginnings of British rule, women's education suffered from severe restrictions. Little girls could, of course, join the village pathasalas along with the boys but their education did not usually proceed farther. By the time the Western system of education was introduced in India women had receded beyond the seclusion of the purdah. Orthodox society frowned upon women joining modern-type schools for fear that they might lose their womanly virtues and would adopt *mlechha* or unorthodox manners and be ostracised. What is more surprising is that the Act of Incorporation (1857) under which the three Universities of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras were established did not provide for the admission of women to University examinations. When in 1877, a girl candidate, Chandra-mukhi Bose, a pupil of the Native Christian Girls' School at Dehra,



sought permission from the authorities of the Calcutta University to appear at the Entrance Examination of the University, it was considered to be a landmark of sufficient importance to figure in the Convocation Address of the then Vice-Chancellor, Arthur Hobhouse. Said he :

"Another event has happened which may prove an isolated accident, or may prove the harbinger of an important movement. A young native Christian woman applied to be admitted to our Entrance examination. Our rules do not contemplate such a thing, and all we could do for her was to put her through the same examination papers as were prepared for the candidates. This was done in order to ascertain whether she really was qualified for the position she aspired to. Well, she has come out from the ordeal triumphantly. We are told that a few, it may be very few, but still a few, other girls will present themselves if they are permitted ; and we shall, therefore, stand face to face with the question whether women shall partake of the benefits of a University system."⁴

It almost looked as though a Wellington was going to face a Napoleon! But then one must realise the social circumstances of the time and the fact that British Power in India was singularly reluctant to interfere with India's age-old social customs and attitudes. Regarding women's right to University education, Vice-Chancellor Hobhouse thought that :

"Many years, or rather many generations, must elapse before such education can become prevalent. It is better that it should be so. We cannot hurry on social and spiritual movements..... In the meantime though the growth must be spontaneous, we may encourage or discourage the first throbings of life, I say, let us encourage them ; it is all we can do."⁵

A long wait was, however, not necessary. In 1878, Regulations for the examination of women candidates, passed by the Senate of the University, were approved by the Governor-General-in-Council. Under these Regulations women candidates were permitted to appear at the B.A. examination, only they should be "examined in a separate place under the Superintendent of ladies." In 1882, the Silver Jubilee year of the University, Chandramukhi Bose and Kadambini

⁴ *Hundred Years of the University of Calcutta*, p. 121.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 121.



Ganguli were admitted to the degree of Bachelor of Arts, the first two lady graduates of India, both students of the "Bethune Female School". While congratulating them, Vice-Chancellor H. J. Reynolds viewed this event as one "which is calculated to give a widespread and powerful impulse to the cause of female education in India" and mentioned "the effect which it may produce in paving the way to a general recognition of the right of the women of this country to education, and of the duty of the men of this country to provide it for them".

The fact that the first two women graduates of this University took nearly a quarter of a century to follow in the footsteps of the two men graduates—Bankimchandra Chatterjee and Judoonath Bose (1858)—shows, in a manner, the differential co-efficient, so to say, between women's education and men's education in India. Vice-Chancellor Reynolds, in his address, quoted above, referred with great satisfaction to the fact that there were 50,000 girls attending schools or receiving instruction in the *zenanas* in the Lower Provinces. Today, the figure runs into millions. But the Indian of today will hardly feel satisfied with the rate of progress registered during the last 150 years. Even at the turn of this century, the percentage of literacy among women was 0.8. There were in 1901 only 12 girls for every 100 boys in the primary stage and only 4 for every 100 boys in the secondary stage. The total enrolment of women students in the stage of higher education (general) was only 188. There were 76 women students in medical colleges and colleges of education. The progress has since been fairly rapid and women have been catching up. But the differential is still quite substantial. Thus, in 1960-61, there were 48 girls for every 100 boys in the primary stage, 25 girls per 100 boys in the lower primary stage and 21 girls per 100 boys in the higher secondary stage, while at the University stage, the percentage of girls was 23 for every 100 boys. In other words, the percentage of girl students varied from 17 per cent to 33 per cent of the total enrolment at the different stages. There has been further advance during the last 5 or 6 years and if the admonition of the Education Commission is going to have any effect the gap between men and women in education is going to be drastically reduced in the near future. "The education of women," the Education Commission avers, "should be regarded as a major programme in education



for some years to come and a bold and determined effort should be made to face the difficulties involved and to close the existing gap between the education of men and women in as short a time as possible.”*

Apart from the growth in the enrolment of women students, there are certain other problems of women's education which have to be faced with even more courage and determination. For a long time education was regarded in the nature of an “accomplishment” for women. The aim of an average Indian family continued to be to fit women for the responsibilities of marriage. The home of her husband was still the destination of the educated girl in common with her less gifted sisters. In other words, to build the home and to mould the character of children during the most impressionable years of infancy to adolescence are still regarded as whole-time jobs for the educated wife. And yet a large number of women are now, for various reasons, crowding around offices and employment exchanges for jobs. The career girl is a Western phenomenon. Typists, stenographers, telephone operators, personal assistants or secretaries, teachers—these have been the traditional assignments for moderately educated girls. Today a very large number are flocking to offices to work as assistants in various capacities side by side with men without any hesitation or embarrassment. Those who have higher qualifications get employment as professors, mostly in women's colleges, but a few also in co-educational institutions. Quite a good number are joining the professions, such as, law, medicine, accountancy, journalism and the like. With a woman Prime Minister in India, we have outdistanced even the U.K., and the U.S.A. A Rajmata (Dowager Maharani), new to politics, has routed a veteran Congress State Chief Minister, known to be an experienced political strategist, out of office. We have had a woman Ambassador and women Ministers—even, in the sphere of education, a woman Vice-Chancellor. Now these developments have meant, in the field of education, that there need be no strict compartmentalisation of men's and women's education. Rather, education should be undifferentiated for both men and women. There may, of course, be certain subjects which may interest women more than men, particularly

* Education Commission Report, p. 138.

when a woman is designed to play the role of a mother or a wife, a nurse or a hostess, the builder of a home and procreator of a race. That is the reason why school and college curricula still carry a number of courses designed for the fair sex.⁷

This equality of the sexes—though it might once have featured in the ancient civilization of India also—is, in modern context, a Western concept. We have adopted it in our constitution and we have made it the principle of our educational policy.

VI

Moral Education

Education in morality seems, at first sight, to be an outmoded idea though, in many countries, education had started under the influence of the Church or of Religious Missions. In ancient India also, education and preparation for a religious life went hand in hand. In the Middle Ages, in Europe, learning was confined for a long time to the cloister. In India the learning of the Vedas was the privilege of the upper castes. For a long time, the so-called secular basis of education was just not recognised.

With enlightenment and the progress of science, education has gradually assumed a secular character. Denominational schools are still permitted and religious instruction may still be given therein. Where people profess the same faith or the students belong to the same religious denomination, the question of religious education forming part of general school education need not raise controversies except on a question of principle. In India, the situation is different. She has had her experience of a politico-religious blood-bath that took place when the Hindus and the Muslims, under instigation of vested sinister interests from either side indulged in a fratricidal orgy of violence and bloodshed on the eve of her Independence. India, the home of many religions and religious sects and denomina-

⁷ Personally, I do not quite appreciate why so much fuss is made about certain subjects for which women are said to be specially suited. For I find that even in cooking, the head cook or the *chef* is invariably a male; so is the master-tailor or the fashion-designer or the hair-dresser. The greatest of the composers, the music maestro, the world famous painters have all been males.



tions found her only hope of a stable national government in strict religious neutrality. The secular State of India was meant to operate as an antidote to religious bigotry. Whether we have been right or wrong in banishing religious teaching and/or moral instruction from the schools is now the point at issue.

Our educational planners, though conscious of the difference between religion as such (particularly in its ritualistic sense) and morality have so far failed to drive home this difference in the curricular set up of our educational system. The Constitution of India has, under Article 28, banned religious instruction in any educational institution wholly maintained out of State funds. The only exception allowed relates to the institutions which, though administered by the State, have been established under any endowment or trust which requires that religious instruction shall be imparted in such institution, but no student can be compelled to attend such instruction having regard to the secular character of our State. The same policy of neutrality permits linguistic or religious minorities to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice ; also it provides that the State " shall not, in granting aid to educational institutions, discriminate against any educational institution on the ground that it is under the management of a minority, whether based on religion or language " (Art. 30). The restrictions imposed under Article 28 will presumably apply to such institutions also.

As to what is meant by religious instruction has not been explained in the Constitution. No doubt the Sri Prakasa Committee on Religious and Moral Instruction, appointed by the Government of India in August, 1959, tried to explain the scope of the term " Religion " and pointed out that, broadly speaking, every religion could be divided into four parts, namely, (i) Personality of the Founder, (ii) Genesis, (iii) Ritual and (iv) Ethical Code.* This view of religion would permit the inclusion of the great religions of the world in the curricula of a higher secondary school and the preparatory stages of University education, to be studied in an objective manner without offending against our secularism. So also a study of the lives and teachings of the famous founders of the great religions of the world

* *Committee on Religious and Moral Instruction (1959) Report*, para. 7.

like Jesus Christ, Gautama Buddha, the Prophet Mohammad, Confucius and others could be included in such a curriculum. Nor need there be any objection to the teaching of the cosmological basis of these religions. The essential teachings of the Sikh Gurus—the Granth Sahib—the Bible, the Quran, the Bhāgavad Gītā the Upanishads, might form a valuable part of the curricula. What should presumably, and by common consent be avoided is the ritualistic aspect of religions or its dogmatic expression which has been the main cause of religious feuds, riots, even wars. In other words, the study of religions should not be a cover for any attempt to propagate any particular religious form, the worship of a particular god or goddess, or any religious orthodoxy, or involve judgment on religious tenets or beliefs. The emphasis should be on knowledge and understanding. It is well-known that much of the world's religious conflicts have been actually due to ignorance or misunderstanding, to a lack of comprehension of the basic or essential features or teachings of the great religious systems of the world, or their debasement in actual practice. This applies, *mutatis mutandis*, to Hinduism also.

The Indian Universities Commission (1948-49) which devoted a full chapter (Chapter 8) to this question, tersely pointed out that the secular State, to be secular, "is not to be religiously illiterate." The Commission quoted Gandhiji as saying : "....we are afraid that religions as they are taught and practised to-day lead to conflict rather than unity. But, on the other hand, I hold that the truths that are common to all religions can and should be taught to all children." The Commission itself made the following final recommendations : "(1) that all educational institutions start work with a few minutes of silent meditation, (2) that in the first year of the Degree course, lives of the great religious leaders like Gautama the Buddha, Confucius, Zoroaster, Socrates, Jesus, Saṅkara, Rāmānuja, Mādhava, Mohammad, Kabir, Nānak, Gandhi be taught, (3) that in the second year some selections of a universalist character from the scriptures of the world be studied, and (4) that in the third year, the central problem of the philosophy of religion be considered." There need hardly be any objection to the adoption of these excellent recommendations, which, in my view, is the barest minimum that could be done under the existing circumstances, or to their incorpora-



tion at least in the Directive Principles of State Policy (Part IV of the Constitution). Probably one of the reasons for this omission was the presumed dearth of competent and qualified teachers who could be depended upon to teach the subject in a detached and objective manner, in a spirit of philosophical enquiry rather than in a dogmatic spirit or with extra-academic motives. It is a sad commentary on India's educational system that after all the broad and liberal education that her people have received, and with her tradition of tolerance and universalism, of her belief in the view of unity in diversity, that in spite of the teachings of the great Rishis of the ancient times and the leaders of thought in modern India such as Rammohun, Rabindranath, Aurobindo, Gandhi, she should have failed to produce sufficient number of teachers of the right type who would be able to rise above sectarian interests or doctrinal orthodoxy. Incidentally it probably lends substance to the point that this failure is due to the omission to include religious and moral instruction as part of an integrated system of education, thereby producing, in addition to ignorance an atmosphere of irreverence and agnosticism in the country, rather than to any innate atheistic mood of our teachers and educationists.

The Education Commission (1964-66) has, however, discussed this problem in Chapter I of their report. It observes :

"The weakening of social and moral values in the younger generation is creating many serious social and ethical conflicts in western societies and there is already a desire among some great Western thinkers to balance the knowledge and skills which science and technology bring with the values and insights associated with ethics and religion at its best, viz., a search for the knowledge of the self, of the meaning of life, of the relationship of man to other human beings and to the ultimate reality. In the situation that is developing it is equally important for us to give a proper value-orientation to our educational system." *

The Commission itself did not make any effort at enumerating a list of values to be inculcated. It took note, however, that neither the Report of the Radhakrishnan Commission (1948) nor that of the Special Committee appointed by the Central Advisory Board of Education (the Sri Prakasa Committee) evoked any effective response. The Commission generally commended the acceptance of the re-

* *Education Commission Report (1964-66)*, Chap. I, p. 19.

commendations made by the Radhakrishnan Commission and wanted the Central and State Governments "to adopt measures to introduce education in moral, social and spiritual values in all institutions under their direct control." The time table of the institutions concerned should set apart "some periods" for such school programmes which should be taken "not by specially recruited teachers but by general teachers, preferably from different communities, considered suitable for the purpose." The Commission also suggested that the University Departments of Comparative Religion should undertake preparation of special literature for use by students and teachers. A general study of the different religions of the world should be a part of the first Degree courses. This should include, as earlier suggested by the Radhakrishnan Commission (and the Sri Prakasa Committee) and now reiterated by the Kothari Commission, lives of great religious teachers, selections from the scriptures of the world with a universal appeal, and finally, the central problems of the philosophy of the religions concerned.¹⁰ It is to be noted that the Commission makes a distinction between 'religious education' and 'education about religions'.¹¹ While the former cannot be accepted in a multi-religious secular State, it is necessary for such a State "to promote a tolerant study of all religions so that its citizens can understand each other better and live amicably together". The Commission accordingly suggests that "a syllabus giving well-chosen information about each of the major religions should be included as a part of the course in citizenship or as part of general education to be introduced in schools and colleges up to the first degree."

It is often thought that secularism is anti-religious. It seems that the educational administrators and policy-framers in India have not developed any clear thinking on the subject. The Education Commission draws attention to the fact that "owing to the ban placed on religious instruction in schools and the weakening of the home influences which, in the past, often provided such instruction are now growing up without any clear ideas of their own religion

¹⁰ *Education Commission Report (1964-66)*, p. 20.

¹¹ *Ibid.* p. 20



and (with) no chance of learning about others". Secularism is neither irreligious nor anti-religious. The Indian Constitution guarantees full religious freedom but, as already pointed out, defines the role of the State as one of neutrality. Even assuming that secularism is somehow inconsistent with the inclusion of religion as such in school and college curriculum, there seems to be no justification for avoiding the inculcation of moral and spiritual values, while young minds are still receptive to such ideas, through carefully planned educational programmes. It is difficult to appreciate the Radhakrishnan Commission's view¹² that the attempt to make students moral and religious by the teaching of moral and religious textbooks is "puerile". "To instruct the intellect", the Radhakrishnan Commission said, "is not to improve the heart". It was afraid that such an attempt would make the teaching of morals and religions "mechanical". And yet, elsewhere, in the same chapter (p. 290), in reply to the observation of the Central Advisory Board of Education (at its twelfth meeting held in Mysore) that spiritual and moral instruction "should be the responsibility of the home and the community" to which the pupil belongs, the Commission stated : "The child is robbed of its full development if it receives no guidance in early years towards a recognition of the religious aspects of life. *If this guidance is left to homes and communities, the chances are that communal bigotry, intolerance and selfishness may increase*" (italics mine). The Sri Prakasa Committee also held a similar view though on different grounds. "In the home", the Committee wrote, "the rituals and the outward forms of religions are usually emphasised ; and the young folk in such an atmosphere, saturated with such ceremonials, are bound to attach too much importance to this aspect of religion to the neglect of ethical teachings and spiritual values".¹³ The logical conclusion is that it should be the function of educational institutions to provide such instruction, subject to necessary guidelines, particularly in the formative years of the pupil's life. In fact, the Central Advisory Board's Memorandum on Post-War Educational Development (1943) had agreed that "religion in the widest

¹² *The Indian Universities Commission Report (1949)*, Vol. I, p. 301.

¹³ *The Committee on Religious and Moral Instruction, 1959*, para. 21.



sense should inspire all education and that a curriculum devoid of all ethical basis will prove barren in the end". It is sad to reflect that there is so much confusion even among the leading educationists of the country on this vital subject. I myself remember the delightful stories of the *Panchatantra*, the *Hitopadeśa*, the *Kathāmālā*, which we read in our school days along with Aesop's Fables, and the lasting impression they made on our young minds. This kind of "puerility" is perhaps preferable to that intellectual sophistication which has produced so many morally maladjusted individuals in our society.

VII

Student Behaviour

The imbalance created in the educational system due to the lack of provision of moral instruction is reflected in the general deterioration of moral standards among our student community. In a sense this is a product of the low moral level of present-day public life. Students bear a special responsibility in this matter because the country would invariably look to its youth for dynamic idealism and the unselfish pursuit of noble aims. It is they who, with their patriotic impulse and self-sacrificing spirit, are to be depended upon to fight vice, corruption and dishonesty at all levels, without fear of consequences. As it is, they themselves have caught the infection of a diseased society and are suffering from a moral breakdown. The ugly effects of such moral deterioration, far-reaching in its sweep, are seen, almost every day, in almost every part of the country, in the readiness of the student community in indulging in grave acts of indiscipline or malpractices at the slightest pretext.

Another aspect, equally disturbing, of student behaviour is seen in their singular aversion to discipline and to the performance of duties (expected of them) while being much too sensitive about rights. The leaders of student unions have perfected the technique of frequently appearing before the authorities of an institution in an organised and agitated manner with a "charter of demands" with no thought of matching it by a *charter of obligations*. Our ancient *Varnāśrama Dharma* was conceived of in terms of duties, duties expected of men



in the different stages of life. The *Guru*, on the occasion of the *Samāvartana* of his disciple, laid upon him (his disciple) a series of obligations and duties, to himself, to his parents and teachers and to his society but never uttered a word about his rights. It was transparent to these great teachers that if everyone did his duty, nobody would need any rights. For, one's rights will be others' duties. The insistence on rights without any corresponding emphasis on duties creates an imbalance in a man's psychic make-up that erodes its moral and spiritual basis. Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan has truly observed that "for a balanced education, we need the development of moral standards and spiritual aspirations".

VIII

Education for the Mass or the Elite ?

The Constitution of India has incorporated a directive principle (Article 45) that the State should endeavour to provide free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years. The State is also directed (Article 46) to promote the educational interests of "the weaker sections of the people." These include the so-called scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes.

It is universally agreed that in a democratic State, education becomes the special responsibility of the Government. In India, education has largely been the product of non-official enterprise. Schools and colleges under private management outnumber those under Government ownership and control. The English in India limited their educational efforts to the establishment of a few select schools and colleges to serve as models, as well as some specialised professional institutions like Engineering and Medical Colleges. Another purpose behind the educational policy of the British Government in India was to replace the traditional system of education by the Western or modern, with its emphasis on liberal and scientific education. Lord Macaulay had openly declared that "a single shelf of good European library is worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia." The Government Resolution of March 7, 1835, which followed Macaulay's Minute (Feb. 2, 1835) announced that "the great object of the British Government ought to be the promotion of European literature and science among the natives of

India," and that " all the funds appropriated for the purposes of education be best employed on English education alone". Macaulay wanted a class which by such education " may be interpreters between us and the millions". The Anglicists won the day. It was thus that the tone of English education in India was set which continued to guide our educational policy for the best part of a century. The English in India were not interested in the education of the masses. They were not interested in the spread of primary education, in removing the blot of illiteracy and ignorance from the face of India. The *pāthśālās*, *tols*, and *maktab*s continued to drag on their existence, in their old grooves, completely uncared for.

Indian educationists, by and large, were carried away by the new zeal of modernism. The Hindu College (Vidyalaya) had been founded in Calcutta in 1817 by some leading Hindus " with David Hare as an adviser and Hyde East as the patron " who wanted to train their children " in a liberal manner as practised by Europeans of condition". Though this College was at first the result of private effort, it soon had to seek Government help and that was how Government was drawn into the picture of higher education in India. The Christian Missions had also become very active after the Charter Act was passed in 1813. Under the impetus of these forces, the European system of education began to spread all over India, a co-operative effort in which the English, the Government and the Indian notables (led by Rammohun Roy) took a leading part, until the establishment of the three great Universities in Calcutta, Bombay and Madras in 1857 gave a new shape and direction to the forces of enlightenment and progress. Indian benefactors and patrons of learning joined hands with the middle-class intelligentsia to accelerate the spread of modern education (after the European model) throughout India by establishing schools, colleges and universities. The Government subsequently detached itself from these efforts being content to lay down the legislative framework of the Universities and to establish the zilla schools and a few professional institutions as model institutions. The Hindu College, later renamed Presidency College, which was once designed to be the nucleus of a University, stood by itself. Its postgraduate classes were subsequently taken over by the University of Calcutta, but it was given the status of a " constituent college".

In this way, higher (University) education meant for an intellectual elite provided the major field for India's educational efforts. Secondary education was also placed under university control. Primary schools continued to drag on a miserable existence. The First Five-Year Plan gives the following assessment of the position as it stood in 1949-50 (*vide Report, Chap. 33*):

(1) Considering the size of the population, the over-all provision of educational facilities is very inadequate. They are provided for only 40 per cent. of the children of the age-group 5-11, 10 per cent. of the persons of the age-group 11-17 and 0.9 per cent. of those of the age-group 17-23. The literacy percentage of our population is only 17.2.

(2) The over-all structure of the educational system is defective in many ways, one of which is that it is top-heavy. In 1949-50, for example, the direct expenditure on primary schools was only 34.2 per cent. of the total educational expenditure. There are grave disparities between different States in the matter of provision of educational facilities. Such facilities are not properly distributed between urban and rural areas. Whereas 82 per cent. of the population live in rural areas, the percentage of the total number of pupils in recognized primary, middle and high schools that were studying in rural areas in 1949-50 was 60, 67 and 26 respectively. At the University level, facilities are practically non-existent in the rural areas. There is lack of balance between provision of facilities for different sections of the society. Whereas women constitute nearly half the population, the girl pupils in the primary, middle and high school stages in 1949-50 were only 28, 18 and 13 per cent. respectively of the total number of pupils studying in these classes. In the Universities and Colleges for the same year, girls were only 10.4 per cent. of the total number of students. The various stages of the educational system were not clearly and rationally marked out.

(3) Another disturbing feature of the situation is the large wastage that occurs in various forms at different stages of education. The absence of adequate facilities for technical and vocational education results in a much larger number of students going in for general education than is justified by the requirements of the country or the tastes and aptitudes of the pupils.

(4) The position in regard to teachers is highly unsatisfactory.
In 1949-50 the percentage of untrained teachers was 41.4 per cent.

in primary schools and 46.4 per cent. in secondary schools. Another feature of the situation is the dearth of women teachers. The scales of pay and conditions of service of teachers are generally very unsatisfactory and constitute a major cause of the low standard of teaching.

(5) The high cost of education, especially at the University level, prevents many a promising student from proceeding to higher studies.

(6) The undue stress on examinations and memory work in the present system of education is not conducive to the development of originality or a spirit of research.

(7) Lack of facilities prevents institutions from building up the physical and mental health of students.

(8) There has been a general neglect of the study of our own culture with the result that the educated classes are often divided by a gulf from the mass of the people. The system of education should help in building up the cultural and political identity of the nation.

It is apparent from these extracts that the authors of the First Plan had their fingers on the right spots showing the weaknesses of the Indian educational system as a whole as it prevailed on the morrow of our independence, except when they speak of the "high cost of education," especially at the University level. True, some countries have adopted the scheme of free education up to the post-graduate stage. There the State exchequer bears the cost, not the student : it does not mean that the cost is necessarily low, certainly not that the cost is lower than that of India. With underpaid teachers, poor libraries and still poorer laboratories, student amenities on any comparable scale being virtually non-existent, and with tuition fees that do not cover, in most cases, even one-third of the outlay, unless over-crowding of the classes is allowed (or generous State subsidy is available), how can we regard education in India as too costly ? In one sense, of course, it is costly—in the sense of the poor quality of the output. In fact, one of the causes of the much talked-of deterioration of educational standards in India is that we have made education too cheap at the cost of quality, so cheap that students do not feel that they have any stake in education.

It is also possible to be critical of the Planning Commission's statement that while they recommend a policy of expansion in various



fields, especially in those of basic and social education, remodelled secondary education and technical and vocational education, they would prefer "consolidation" of existing secondary and University education. If consolidation is held to mean that there should not be further progress or expansion (with less than 1 per cent. of young people in the age-group 17-23 which covers the period of collegiate education receiving education), it would obviously lead to stagnation, if not retrogression, apart from other undesirable social consequences. It is fortunate that in the succeeding years (after 1949-50), the nation's investment in education has progressively increased, but the student enrolment figures are still far from satisfactory. The over-all picture points rather to the need of further strenuous efforts for improving the educational performance in India. It is necessary to realise that without further efforts and a clear enunciation of values on which State policies on education must be based, the situation would actually be getting from bad to worse, with sacrifice of quality for the sake of quantity due to the deficiencies and bottlenecks that have developed and to the fact that priorities have not been correctly fixed.

It may be useful to recall a controversy that had developed about half a century ago between the school of thinking represented by Asutosh Mookerjee and that represented by G. K. Gokhale. Asutosh spoke in favour of the quick spread of University education as the spearhead of the nation's progress while Gokhale insisted on giving priority to primary education. When graduates, turned out by thousands, would perforce find the doors of employment closed (because of the lack of opportunities in those days), it would ignite the spark of divine discontent that would convert our educated classes into the moving force of the national movement. It was also evident that without a steady supply of competent teachers who would man the schools, both primary and secondary, in increasing number, any effort to expand education at the primary and secondary levels would be like putting the cart before the horse. This was how the problem of priorities was visualised. For the time being, though for different reasons, the view of this school of thinking coincided with the current thinking of the bureaucratic rulers who wanted an army of graduate clerks to man their offices, their factories and other establishments, men who would assist



them in the dispensation of British justice, in collecting revenue, in enforcing law and order,—in essence, to play the role of "interpreters" of British policy to the common peoples. An uncritical appreciation of these conflicts led many patriotic people to dub the colleges and universities as "golamkhanas," the manufactories of slaves, and the concept of "national" education evolved. Asutosh Mookerjee was not slow to give a spirited defence of his policy which it is not necessary now to elaborate. But it is a significant commentary on the contradictions of the situation that when the Government itself found that the main spearhead of the anti-British movement was the educated classes of India whom they had helped to create, our rulers developed a sort of conditioned reflex towards the educated middle class and, as a result, turned their attention to the task of improving primary education. Liberal statesmen of England began to talk of disturbing "the placid, pathetic contentment of the masses" but their deeds did not match words as we have already seen. The net result of this change in attitude was rather a negative one, to put University education as a whole on the black list and to subject the newly established Universities to stringent control with their autonomy cut to size.

This was the legacy which fell to India at the dawn of her freedom. The question is still one of priorities, because our resources are limited though our hopes are high. Choice is still more difficult now than it was in ever before. It is no longer one between primary education and higher education. That choice still confronts us. But it is also a choice between education as such and other competing demands on our economy. Education, in the estimate of the Third Plan comes next to agriculture, related sectors of industry, power and transport; even then it comes as part of a package scheme of "social services and allied fields of development," though the Plan stresses, in general terms, the significance of education and other social services "which cannot be too greatly stressed". The Third Plan provided for an outlay of Rs. 500 crores including Rs. 370 crores for general education and Rs. 130 crores for technical education. Of the amount to be invested in general education, it was reckoned that Rs. 180 crores might be allocated for elementary education, Rs. 90 crores for secondary education, Rs. 75 crores on University education and Rs. 25 crores



for other programmes. The inadequacy of these provisions will be easily appreciated in the context of the huge backlog of illiteracy and ignorance that it is the duty of our planners to remove. As already stated, out of a total investment of Rs. 10,200 crores which the Third Plan had provided for, Rs. 500 crores, or less than 5 per cent. was allocated to education, both general and technical. The expenditure was barely 2 per cent of the total Plan investment.

There is no doubt that the future educational policy in India will look more towards the improvement of elementary education rather than collegiate education. This is as it should be for no nation can progress with such a huge burden of illiteracy as India is now carrying. But at the same time it is to be remembered that higher education is also not very well endowed and that it is meant to provide the leadership of the nation. Its quality continues to be shamefully poor. In other countries, higher education has depended more on private endowments than on State patronage. In India private endowments are an uncertain factor. Therefore, it would be a wrong policy if the State in India insisted on promoting primary education at the cost of higher education and research.

CHAPTER VI

INDIAN PATH-BREAKERS IN EDUCATION :

(1) RABINDRANATH TAGORE

I

Childhood Days

It is said of Tagore that he came to education with no fixed ideas. This is true in a certain sense. His formal education was limited to three elementary schools. He did not take a degree nor attend any college. But this lack of formal education was more than compensated for by a very elaborate programme of instruction he had to undergo at home even when he was attending a school. The Poet writes in his *Reminiscences* that this programme was devised at the instance of his third brother, Hemendranath, who wanted him to be educated in diverse subjects. Consequently, the Poet had to read a lot more than was required in his school curriculum. The course started early in the morning with a bout of wrestling with Hira Singh. He had also to do gymnastics and drawing after he returned from school. The reading list included both Bengali and English literature, Physics, Biology, Mathematics, History, Geography and Geometry. A succession of private tutors took charge of his education which started at 6 in the morning and ended at 9 at night. On Sundays he had singing lessons. Besides his usual readings, he attended, also on Sundays, practical demonstration in the natural sciences which had a great fascination for him. A medical student from the Campbell Medical School gave him lessons in Human Anatomy for which a skeleton had to be procured. In between, he had to memorise rules of Sanskrit grammar *Mugdhabodhi*. To him these rules seemed a bit more hard than the bones of the human anatomy.

These childhood days were consequently not a source of pleasure to him. His school experiences were particularly unhappy.¹ " I

¹ When his elder brother Somendranath and his nephew Satyaprasad (who was older than the Poet) were sent to school and the young Poet set up a howl at being left out, his Tutor gave him a good thrashing and told him :

" Now you are crying for not being sent to school ; later you will cry a lot more to avoid going to school."



do not know if I learnt anything there but do remember the kind of punishment that was meted out to offending boys." A boy who failed to do his lessons was made to stand on the bench and to hold a load of slates on each of his outstretched hands. This unhappy experience of school life left a deep scar on the Poet's sensitive mind. It provided a foundation for his educational outlook. His views on this type of schools may be summed up in the Poet's own words :

" It forcibly snatches away children from a world full of the mystery of God's own handiwork, full of the suggestions of personality. It is a mere method of discipline which refuses to take account of the individual. It is a manufactory especially designed for grinding out uniform results."

As we shall see presently, Rabindranath's views on the education of the child had a close resemblance to those of the *Ecole Nouvelle*, particularly of Rousseau. The adverse attitude towards formal school education which the Poet developed was probably based on his own experience of the three schools which he had attended successively during the most impressionable period of his childhood. This experience, he has told us, was largely negative. He had learnt (he was reported to have said in one of his talks at Geneva) how *not* to treat children and how *not* to give lessons, and that education separated from life had no meaning. The child, according to him, lives much more in the sub-conscious than in clear consciousness, and, therefore, during the first few years of his education, neither his mind nor his memory should be taxed with knowledge but care should be taken to see that his sub-conscious is saturated with beauty through a living and creative contact with Nature. This idea he tried later to put into practice in his own school at Santiniketan.

It is difficult to say what would have happened to the Poet if he had had the good fortune to read in a really good school, where teachers do not just stand up giving lessons like " living phonographs".

The Poet writes : " At this distance of time I do not recall the name or the features of this tutor of mine. But I have a vivid recollection of his warning as well as the sound beating that he gave me. Nor have I ever been treated to such prophetic words." Anyhow, his howl of protest had effect. He was admitted, at an earlier age than most boys, to the Oriental Seminary founded by Gour Mohan Addy and held in the house of Gorachand Bysack at Garanhata.



We indeed feel sorry that he had to spend the beautiful years of his young life in that drab, stifling atmosphere, though he seems to have compensated for it by playing truant whenever he could. But we are at the same time thankful, for we got a path-breaker in the field of education, the inspiration of a new thinking, as the result of his earlier frustrating experiences.

The Poet's first initiation to literature, as a child, was with the stuff that he used to find in the servant's room. It was to this room that the little child was consigned to spend his days. It was here that the Poet read Chāṇakya's *ślokas* in translation and the *Rāmāyaṇa* of Krittibāsa. The room was situated in the south-east corner of the first floor of the Poet's house.² "We were under the strict rule of our servants. They had the duty to look after us. To simplify their task, they had forbidden all kinds of movement." Not only was the Poet (along with his brother and nephew) prevented from going outside the boundaries of the house ; he could not move about at will even inside the house.

The Poet remarks that this lack of acquaintance with the outside world was just the reason for the unfolding out of his mental vista which an unfettered imagination creates. A child who is overloaded with heaps of toys or other bric-à-brac has little time for the play of imagination. One is apt to forget that in the feast of joy, the child rather feeds on what the mind offers, than from sources external to it. This is the first lesson that is learnt in the childhood. According to the Poet, the unfortunate child who is treated to a surfeit of toys ruins his play life.

² When he was very young, his servant, Syam, himself a boy, used to draw a circle with a piece of chalk around the Poet with a grim warning that if he skipped the cordon, a dire calamity would befall him. The young captive had read the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the story of Sita was fresh in his mind. So he could not dare disobey the warning : instead he drew up the blinds of the window that looked out on a tank and a big banyan tree and counted his hours fixing his eyes on the scene.



II

Tagore's Approach to Education : Rousseau's Influence

On the question of the child's play life and its intimate connection with his education, the Poet observes in his " *Sikshā-Samasyā* " (The Problems of Education) :

" When the mind of the child is fresh, his curiosity full of life and his senses vigorous, let him at this period of his life play about under the open skies where the sun and the clouds hold their rendezvous ; do not deprive him of this supreme joy of the *Bhuma*. Let the rising sun of the soft and clear morning unfold every single day of his own life with its glorious touch, let the pensive and beautiful evening, lit up with the rays of the setting sun, silently close the eye-lids of the dying day under a starry sky. Let the orchestrated drama in six Acts of the six seasons, steeped in myriad delights, be enacted on the stage set by the foliage of trees and plants in his presence.....O you, guardians, ripe with age, you dealer in merchandise, however vapid your imagination, your heart cold as stone, I implore you, do not say even out of a sense of shame that all this is unnecessary : let your young wards feel the direct, affectionate touch of the great Mother who presides over this Universe, do not ignore it simply because you have not the sense to understand how much better it works than the inquisition of your inspector or the question paper of your examiner." (*Rāchanāvali*, Viśva Bhārati Edn. XII.)³

This approach to education has a close affinity to that of the New School (" *Ecole Nouvelle* ") Movement which conceives of Nature as educator and is born out of the consciousness that the failure of formal education is due to the omission to recognise the role of Nature in the child's education. It is based on the realization that " every child has within itself the instincts, energies and machinery of growth necessary to become a fully developed and happy adult being". The movement believes that the way of teaching is less important than the way of learning. So far as the child is concerned, the movement values the spontaneous activity of the child. The child grows as the plant grows, according to its own internal laws, and that " it must truly possess what it itself experiences". The child, according

³ I beg to be excused for this rather clumsy translation of a beautiful passage and invite the Bengali-knowing reader who by chance has not yet read it to refer to Vol. XII of *Rāchanāvali*, Viśva-Bhārati Edition, or Vol. XI of the Government (Centenary) Edition (essay on *Sikshā-Samasyā*). But, I believe, the clear import of these lines, even under translation, cannot be missed.



to this view, as one writer has summarised it, "is not merely an incomplete adult but a creature *sui generis*, and youth is a form of life, complete and absolutely valuable in itself". In fact, the autogenic view of human development had held the centre of the educational stage in the view of several philosophers of which the New School Movement has been a powerful expression. It is the child's protest against the schools run by the adults of his time. Rabindranath, for instance, had his prototype in Luther who reflected the same attitude of protest, and with very good personal reasons. We have it that Luther, like Tagore, had a horror of the schools of his time, which he thought were no better than "prisons with tyrants as their teachers". It is said that he had himself been beaten fifteen times in one morning. No wonder that Luther should have developed the same kind of repugnance with which the Poet also looked upon the treatment he had received in school. In either case, this experience led to the statement of a new theory of education as applied to a growing child. Luther said that children should be brought up in a manner "conformable to their age, and as it were by playing". What is more interesting is that in his revolt against the contemporary schools for children, Luther was not alone. In 1580, Montaigne was protesting against the view of education as mere memory exercises, against mere bookish education.

Before Rousseau published *Emile* we come across a pre-view, as it were, of the doctrine of "natural education" in the writings, and even in a few cases, the practices, of some of the protagonists of the New School Movement. Among the practitioners of the new doctrine, we have the Swiss Pestalozzi as one of the leading figures to attempt to give a concrete shape to the new doctrines. He made several attempts to found the ideal school, at first with his wife at Neuhof, and later at Stanz where Froebel is known to have been an interested visitor. It was Pestalozzi who wrote that "the essential principle of education is not teaching but love". The Planta at Zisers was also an attempt to set up an ideal community, a short-lived attempt on the lines of Rousseau's thinking, but a year before *Emile* was published. After Rousseau, and towards the close of the nineteenth and at the beginning of the twentieth century, the New School Movement received a great impetus in England, Germany and Switzerland. The schools that were the products of the New



Movement were all co-educational, and inspired by the education-through-the-senses idea. So far as Tagore was concerned, his model had close and interesting ideological affinity with that of Rousseau, to whom we now return.

Rousseau's *Emile*, published in 1762, was a revolutionary landmark which had influenced Goethe as much as, almost 160 years later, it influenced Rabindranath and led to the birth of *Sāntiniketan* (literally, "the Abode of Peace"). Rousseau viewed childhood as a state in itself and stressed the importance of relating education to interest and action. It was based on his conception of "negative education" to which we find an echo in many of Tagore's writings. Of course the Poet's Indian genius was not content with the purely negative aspect of his protest. He invested it with a spiritual content by making the child the central figure of his *āśrama*.

In fact, it would be interesting to develop the parallelism between Rousseau and Tagore. Dr. Sasadhar Sinha in his book on "*The Social Thinking of Rabindranath Tagore*" has taken great pains to bring out the similarity in the views of Rousseau and Poet Tagore. It is not known whether the Poet was directly indebted to Rousseau for his idea but there is little doubt about the striking parallelism in their educational ideas. I make no apology in following Dr. Sinha in his exposition of this parallelism for we find, in agreement with Dr. Sinha, that the influence of the author of *Emile* on Tagore "was not confined to general principles but found expression in specific practices at Sāntiniketan".

Emile is Rousseau's child of nature. "Let him learn", says Rousseau of *Emile*, "to perform every exercise which encourages every agility of body.....let him practise jumping and leaping, climbing trees and walls. Let him always find his balance, and let his every movement and gesture be regulated by the laws of weight, long before he learns to explain them by the science of statics"; or, that "Nature is good, all that is required is not to oppose it in its progress. Leave *Emile* to grow up with the tendencies which he was born with and he is sure to be virtuous."

Thus Rousseau deduces his theory of education: "This education," he says, "comes to us from nature, from men, from things. The inner growth of our organs and faculties is the education of nature, the use we learn to make of this growth is the education of

men, what we gain by experience of our surroundings is the education of things." Tagore also observes : " At any rate during the early period of education, children should come to their lesson of truths through natural processes—directly through persons and things." The importance of Nature as educator, of teachers who can establish a bond of fellowship through sympathy and understanding, of a cultured background (" the atmosphere of ideas ") ; this formed the warp and woof of Rabindranath's educational philosophy. I have already quoted from " *Sikshā Samasyā* " to show Rabindranath's great love of Nature as it opens up the first chapter of the child's education. About teachers, he had a wholesome repugnance to one who was " a mere vehicle of text-books." His model was the man who made teaching personal, " he himself the source of it, made of life stuff, easily assimilable by it".

Rousseau wanted his Emile to run barefooted. Why should his pupil be " always compelled to wear the skin of an ox under his foot ?" Let Emile run about barefoot all the year round, upstairs, downstairs and in the garden. " Far from scolding him," Rousseau avers, " I shall follow the example, only I shall be careful to remove any broken glass." The boys of Sāntiniketan also walked about barefooted and the Poet " was always removing it (broken glass) from the path of his boys," Dr. Sinha tells us. To wear shoes, according to him " amounted to a grievance against God for not giving us hooves instead of beautifully sensitive soles."⁴

⁴ It will naturally be rather difficult for a modern man to reconcile himself with this interpretation of running about barefooted. We are almost in the same predicament as the headmaster, mentioned by the Poet, who visiting Sāntiniketan, was shocked to see a boy climbing up a tree and finding a reading place over a cleft branch of the tree. There is no doubt that the headmaster had a point of view, apart from the shock produced by such a glaring breach of discipline in regard to behaviour of boys while in school. It is true boys do hurt themselves in their play-life and they should be allowed to hurt themselves, for that is Nature's method of education which the whole of the animal world, for instance, follows. This type of education proceeds through personal experience and, applied over a larger field, represents the essence of " the new education " advocated by John Dewey and others. The Poet has also given an elaborate explanation and justification of this method (*vide* his essay on " My school " published in " Personality "—1917). At the same time, it is not possible for every school, when boys are free to climb trees and indulge in other adventure, to have a hospital attached to it to take charge of casualties which are likely to be quite numerous in the situation contemplated and may even turn out to be fatal. Is it also possible to be in constant attendance on the boys, to sweep away broken pieces of glass from the paths of the barefooted children ? May



The main point, of course, is that the child should be allowed to grow up in a natural way and that his education should be left to the promptings of Nature. This education begins from his birth. Let a bond of sympathy grow between the child and Nature. It is this bond of sympathy that should also bind the teacher and the taught. It is not the aim of education, according to Rousseau, to produce magistrates, soldiers or priests but to make man of the child. "Before his parents chose a calling for him, Nature called him to be a man.... Life is the trade that I would teach him," said Rousseau. In this also, the views of Rousseau and Tagore coincide. Though Sāntiniketan has undergone many changes, particularly after the Poet passed away, the purpose of the Poet was the same as that of Rousseau : to free the child from the tyranny of a school that depresses his personality, that robs him of his natural sources of pleasure and joy in the play-life that Nature has designed for him, that deadens his imagination and atrophies his natural faculties.

To be brief, the highlights of this comparative estimate may thus be summed up :—

First, both Tagore and Rousseau believed that in his early life the child should be allowed to grow up in an atmosphere of complete freedom with Nature as the guide. Education should begin from his birth.

Secondly, both agreed that the child's education came from three sources, namely, nature, man and things. Both agree on the uselessness of formal school education.

Thirdly, both believed that the type of education they had in view could not be given in the crowded cities, but in villages. Rousseau had a wholesome dread of the "vile morals" of the town, "the corrupting influences of the city."

Fourthly, both agreed that the genuine teacher should be no "mere vehicle of text books." Rousseau had a clear contempt of didactic instruction, of "mere spoken injunctions and prohibitions." With him, the teacher's "reputation, his words, his example" would

be, it is possible with one Emile to look after, or half a dozen, in a garden which is regularly kept clean. But what if the number went up to 50,100,200,500 ? And then why only shoes ? When we wear a coat, for example, or any other outer covering for the body, do we do it out of a grievance that God has not given us long coarse hairs to cover our bodies instead of giving us a beautiful bare figure (not for all of us, though ; for some, at any rate, the coat can be a merciful cover ; but that is another matter) ?

count. With Tagore the teacher should make his teaching "personal," he should himself be "the source of it."

Finally, both took education to have for its object the making of *man*. To both, education was highly individualistic. So Tagore said : the formal school "is a mere method of discipline which refuses to take account of the individual." It is something like "a manufactory for grinding out uniform results." With Rousseau, Emile "will be neither a magistrate, a soldier, nor a priest ; he will be a Man. All that becomes a man he will learn as quickly as any other." According to Tagore, we must make the purpose of our education "nothing short of the highest purpose of man."

With similarities, there are also differences. Tagore, unlike Rousseau, had a spiritualised approach towards the problems of life, towards understanding the integrated personality of man. By "the highest purpose of man" Tagore meant "the fullest growth and freedom of the soul." Rousseau's "man" was content to live "at peace with himself." Again we find that the Poet's conception of Nature is imbued with a deep spiritual content. With him Nature is almost personalised whereas with Rousseau it is an aid to help "the inner growth of the organs and faculties of the child." To put it to use demanded human agency.

Again, the Poet's concept of the *guru* recalls the guru of the *tapovana*, the forest hermitage, where the aim of education was to help man reach out towards his spiritual perfection. It is this picture of the *āśrama* which, with its lofty endeavour of Brahmacharya and the quietude of its surroundings that led the poet to the concept of "Sāntiniketan Brahmacharyāśram." The idea of the *tapovana* is entirely Indian : so also is the concept of Santiniketan.

The institutional shape which Tagore gave to his educational ideas, the great experiment in which he staked his all, which made him even beg from door to door, was something in which the Poet had no counterpart in Rousseau. Visionary as both of them were, Tagore tried to carry out in practice what he had preached.⁵

⁵ Later on, the Poet had to concede that children must go to Universities, must take the examinations and follow a curriculum. Well, in our guru's āśramas also, in ancient India, they followed a curriculum, a very stiff one. "We have to do it in our school also," he said, "but I know that I am guilty of a crime." (Speech at Rousseau Institute, Geneva, May 4, 1921)



In developing his idea of education, Tagore went farther than Rousseau. Though both he and Rousseau had laid the utmost emphasis on the development of the individual and on the aims of education, the former, as the logical outcome of his effort to give an institutional expression to his educational ideas (which led to the establishment of Sāntiniketan), was moved to consider the social aspect of education. Rousseau, by contrast did not develop his line of thinking in that direction. Nor were the circumstances of his (Rousseau's) time propitious for the development of a "national" theory of education such as was propagated by Tagore during the Swadeshi agitation.

III

Sāntiniketan : A Theory

Some of the ideas to which expression has been given in the preceding section were presumably present in the Poet's mind in an incipient form before the time arrived to give it a practical shape. The time came when the Poet found himself worried over the education of his son, Rathindranath.

Here probably came the first realisation that education must require an institutional form. And yet his distrust of the formal type of education was deep and persistent. In 1901 was established his school, Sāntiniketan, at Bolpur, a village in the district of Birbhum,* in West Bengal.

It was to be expected that he would not be interested in setting up a residential school of the usual type, but a school where he could develop his educational ideas and give them a practical shape. He had thought over it in connection with his son's education while

* Practically his father Maharshi Devendranath, had made the choice for him. It was he who had selected this lovely spot, away from the din and bustle of the town, for its calm quietude and its peaceful, natural surroundings, as suitable for his own meditation, his communion with God. It was here under the hospitable shade of a tree that Maharshi had realized his Sadhana. Young Rabindranath had visited the spot before with his father, and now, when his educational ideas were struggling to take shape and the necessity of starting his son's education had assumed an urgency, he was inevitably drawn to this place as the most suitable for his purpose.



he was in Silaidā. In selecting this particular site for Sāntiniketan, he was motivated by the ancient idea of the Guru's hermitage in the forest. His longing for the *tapovana*, the forest abode, which had nourished our ancient civilization, has been repeatedly expressed in his numerous poems and literary writings. The place in Bolpur where the Poet's revered father, a deeply religious man himself who had drunk deep of the fountain of our ancient culture, had a classical setting. He had himself sung devotional songs, *Brahmasangit*, to his father and had been compellingly attracted towards the vast storehouse of wisdom to be found in the Upanishads and other sacred literature. He therefore wanted to set up a school on the model of the ancient *āśramas*.

That being the concept of his school, it had to be ensured that it would provide the fullest scope for the development and training of the child's natural instincts, and that, secondly, it would be based on a close personal touch between the teacher and the pupil. The teacher, in fact, would be something more than a teacher : he would be a *guru*. The whole system would revolve round the child.

What would be the objectives of this education and what would be its value to modern India ? Now, to Tagore as to all great educationists, education has certain universal values. The primary object of education would be to measure up to those values. All other objectives are secondary. The universal nature of these values is implicit in that the growth of the child is a human problem. If we neglect this aspect of education, as Rousseau said, we may turn out a magistrate, a soldier or a priest, but we shall fail to produce a well-balanced man, an integrated personality. On the other hand, if education succeeds in producing such a personality, that is, in making a man of the child who has attained the harmony of his life with the world of nature, men and things, that is, with all existence, he will, as Rousseau says, " learn all that becomes a man as quickly as any other". This is Education for Life. A man who receives this education will not find any difficulty in preparing himself for any avocation.

The founder of Sāntiniketan also laid stress on the universal values of education. " We must ", he said, " make the purpose of our education nothing short of the highest purpose of man ". In fact,



formal scholastic education was intended to form only a very minor part of education at Sāntiniketan. "I knew for sure", says Tagore, "that what was essential was an atmosphere of culture and not the pursuit of a drab routine". We "should not rob the child of the earth to teaching him geography or of language to teach him grammar", he said. The curriculum (if we can describe it as such) at Sāntiniketan had (and still has) a rich cultural content. Art, dance, music, painting, dramatics—all these used to be taught under expert professional guidance and under the loving and fostering care of "Gurudeva" as the Poet was affectionately called by the āśramites, the inmates of the school. There is no doubt that in these spheres, the contributions of Sāntiniketan have had world-wide recognition. It has developed rich traditions, thanks to the Poet's own contributions, a heritage in which all the inmates of the *āśrama* freely share.

The type of teacher who would fit in with this system would be different from the usual type we come across in schools. He must have the capacity of teaching through "the deeper language of example", of imparting knowledge not by reading books, in the manner of a phonograph, but through his own spoken words. To such teaching the child's mind responds without effort and develops a sense of direct communication with the mind of the teacher, and through him, with the world. A bookish knowledge is like borrowed knowledge. It does not give one the sense of satisfaction flowing from direct acquisition of the knowledge.

The teacher must not only have the felicity of teaching and holding the child mind, he must be a *guru*. The mercenary teacher is out to sell learning and to seek purchasers of the same. The *guru* will illumine the mind of the pupil with the light of his own wisdom, who will infuse his own life into the life of his disciple whose welfare he will seek through his own love and affection. Only then he will be giving something more abiding, something more precious, than the mere vendor of education. He may be paid a salary but he will return much more in value.

Therefore, the model school, according to the Poet, will be a school, far from the city, that would function in the solitude of the open sky, in its forest home, where teachers will carry on their studies



and their work and the students will grow, in the placid atmosphere of the cultivation of knowledge. And so—

If possible, the Poet says, the school will have a piece of cultivable land attached to it which will be used for growing food necessary for the inmates of the school and in which they will render active assistance. There will be cows for milk and products and the students will be required to join in tending the cows. During their leisure time, they will work in the garden, water the plants, build the fences. Thus they will not only make friends with nature, they will work with her.

Weather permitting, the students will meet for their class under the shade of the larger trees. Some of their lessons they will learn while they take a walk along with the teacher among the trees. With the fall of the evening they will learn about the stars and planets or devote the time to music or to the study of the *purāṇas* or listen to stories from history.

If they commit any breach of discipline they will punish themselves through the method of penance (*prāyaśchitta*). From their early life they should learn that it is one's duty to confess one's faults, without which no real atonement is possible.

The school, he said, need not have any furniture such as tables and benches. It is sometimes difficult to secure furniture but none can rob one of a share of the floor. The Poet wanted it to be understood that the school should follow the ideal of doing away with all superfluities. He points out that our country had no difficulty in establishing *pāthashālas* as long as we were free to draw on our floors ; difficulty arose when we had to procure slate and pencil. The child must be taught the art of economy and the culture of simplicity.

The school will be known by its *gurus*, not by the usual run of teachers. The *guru* will engage his heart and soul in the service of his pupils. That may not always amount to much in the case of individual *gurus*, but being a *guru*, he will surely be ashamed to give less than what he can.

Assuming, then, that the Poet wanted to build his Sāntiniketan on the lines of this model, the question is, has it succeeded ?

Those who would like to have a straight answer would, I am afraid, have to be disappointed. I would rather refer them to Tagore's " My School ", an English essay, included in his book on *Personality*. There, he says, " the highest education is that which does not merely give us information but also harmonises our life with all existence ". The question may, therefore, be re-put : Has Sāntiniketan succeeded in giving this type of education ?

Again we are faced with a difficulty, for an ideal is not always matched by practice.

Those who want their wards to pass examinations and obtain a diploma as a passport to a lucrative job will naturally not feel much attracted by the curriculum of Sāntiniketan where the students, so they might feel, do not get much of the education that would qualify them for jobs, but receive a lot of " culture " instead. It would



be difficult to answer this criticism for we might be talking in different languages. The only way of testing the validity of such a criticism would be to refer to the employment register !

Sāntiniketan, if we can put it like this, points to a way of life. It seeks to cater to the spirit of man. It makes education a joyful experience ; it adds halo to the childhood. Was it not Rousseau who said : " Hold childhood in reverence.....Give nature time to work before you take over her business, lest you interfere with her dealings "?

There is thus every reason to believe that the child in Sāntiniketan is designed to grow into a distinct type, easily identifiable, as the products of English Public Schools are supposed to be. Of course they will be of different types. The message of Sāntiniketan is universal where education is meant to be a joyful experience of the spirit. But it has no " class " structure as such, though its education leaves an impression on its students and is calculated to inspire them with a broad humanism in outlook and attitudes. But like the first-line disciples of a famous prophet or *guru*, the products of Sāntiniketan do enjoy a prestige as forming a society of the *elite*, in its own right, which it is natural to expect under such circumstances to produce a sort of in-group feeling, standing apart from others not so fortunate. What Sāntiniketan provides is a special method, if not type, of personality training. If you prefer it, you are welcome. Critics very often miss this point.

A point of criticism is fixed on the curricular deficiency of Sāntiniketan. The study of the more serious and exacting of the disciplines, particularly the teaching of the science subjects, in their both fundamental and experimental aspects, cannot be left simply to Nature (whatever that may mean). India, no doubt, requires men of good taste and culture who have cultivated the graces of life, men of broad humanism and understanding. But the country also requires scholars and technicians. The answer to this is that Sāntiniketan does not admittedly provide for specialisation, particularly in the technical subjects ; it is rather a basic or preparatory course, with its own fields of specialisation, for instance, in the fine arts. There is also the school at Sriniketan at Surul, a few miles from Bolpur, which partly meets the needs of a technical or vocational education. The beautiful products of Sriniketan arts have established a tradition

that is clearly identifiable. In fact, it is an institution complementary to Sāntiniketan. However, Sāntiniketan has moved away from its original position for, in a later period, it had to bow to the needs of the times, and so to provide for examinations and establish a link with the Calcutta University. Now, with the establishment of the Viśva-Bhāratī University, it is in a better position to meet the criticisms about its curricular deficiencies. The main point, however, is, as already suggested, that in assessing Sāntiniketan, the critics must not speak in two voices. Do they, or do they not, accept the values in education for which Sāntiniketan stands ? How far are the ideals of education as followed in ancient India in the Guru's *āśramas* a valid subject for experiment in modern India ? If the current opinion is that they are unacceptable, there it may be allowed to rest. There is no further scope for criticism. But Tagore thought otherwise.

Another point is that Sāntiniketan had its distinctive character as long as the poet lived in and with it. This exclusive dependence on an individual, however great, is not good for academic progress. With the passing away of the Poet, its life-spirit seems to have gone. The question has to be faced : has Sāntiniketan outlived its appeal since the death of the Poet ? Here, again, the answer is : Sāntiniketan has met the crisis. The State has stepped in and it is now yielding to modern requirements, with an effort not to sacrifice its essential character. It is now developing certain other aspects of its life : its social and national, and international aspects, in addition to the academic.

IV

Moving Towards a Change : Education as a Social Concept

With the growth of Sāntiniketan, Rabindranath's theoretical approach to education slowly underwent a change. When the enrolment gradually rose to 200 students, the Poet had to do some re-thinking. The outbreak of the War, the national upsurge in Bengal, the Poet's international and humanistic outlook, all these underlined the inadequacy of the purely personal or individualistic approach to education which Sāntiniketan had originally stood for. In 1921, about two decades after the starting of the school, Tagore was confessing at Geneva : "Today I have undoubtedly acquired



some experience, but that experience is still, in a manner of speaking, fluid ; it has not yet crystallised into a structure with sharp edges, the straight lines of which could be taken for guiding principles". This is taken from the talk he gave at the Rousseau Institute and published in French in *L'Éducateur* on June 11, 1921. From the same talk, as well as from other sources, it appears that the founder of Sāntiniketan had planned its educational system primarily for children below the 'teens. A child up to his twelfth year, as the Poet said, lives much more in the sub-conscious than in clear consciousness and it is important so to devise his education that "his subconscious is saturated with beauty through the contact of living nature". Education at Sāntiniketan had this primary purpose. It is difficult to assimilate these ideas to existing educational patterns. Does it mean that the standard of the Sāntiniketan school was meant to conform to the first year of what is now called the "Senior Basic" standard, which covers standards VI-VIII of a high school, and meant for students of the age-group 11 to 14 ? And yet, as the Poet tells us, "an inspector" of the Calcutta University who came to see him one day found him reading Shelley's "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty" with his twelve-year old boys. Naturally the Inspector was surprised, for Shelley is usually included in the curriculum of Colleges and Universities. The Poet tells us that he did not believe "in being able to make things childish in order to give them to children". I wish some Professors of English Literature had attended that class of Tagore's to see what exactly the teaching was like. It would probably have been a pedagogic revelation. Those twelve-year olds must be near-sixties now ; perhaps, they might help with lesson-notes prepared from memory.

Now the point is that this class of 12-year olds is a long shot from Rousseau's concern with a single Emile, or Rabindranath's with a single young Rathindranath. It is no longer a case of watching and guiding the development of a single human personality, or entrusting him completely to the care of Nature with apparently no set curricular content. An institution, on the other hand, is a different proposition. It is, if we may put it like that, a macro-personality. In a way, this macro-personality was provided for in the Poet's concept of an "atmosphere of culture". True, such an atmosphere cannot be defined in concrete, institutional terms. But it does involve a

social medium. What starts initially as an essay in personal relationship—that of the child with the mother based on personal love—is soon transformed into a wider and more complex relationship. Even the relation of the *guru* with the disciple, as in ancient India, though highly personalised, made the young *Brahmachārin* a member of the *guru's* family. This gave him a simultaneous training in social virtues which was as necessary for the fullest development of man as the education he received from his *guru*. With the extension of the *āśrama*, the development of the child depended no longer on the uninhibited operation of his natural instincts as guided and trained by Nature. His mind was now brought into association with other minds. His personality received a re-orientation.

The idea that man's fulfilment is in and through the broadening of this relationship lays the basis of the Poet's social outlook on education. "I have always insisted", the Poet declares, "that education must be reconciled with life", and observes appreciatively that in Russia, the boundary of the school does not separate it from daily life. By the end of the first World War, as Dr. Sasadhar Sinha has pointed out, the Poet had come to the conclusion that it was neither possible nor desirable for the individual to remain in his "educational ivory tower".

Sāntiniketan itself was born as a sort of private domestic school. Later it grew into an institution of somewhat like the "public school" type, and yet not quite like it. An *esprit de corps* among the students is the most distinguishing feature of such a school. Sāntiniketan sought to be, for its students, a blend of individual and collective personality. An intimate bond of love and affection grew up between the school and its young pupils as is beautifully reflected in the school-song :

*She is our own, the darling of our hearts,
our Sāntiniketan.
Our dreams are rocked in her arms.
Her face is a fresh wonder of love
every time we see her.
For she is our own, the darling of our hearts.
In the shadows of her trees we meet,
In the freedom of her open sky.
Her mornings come and her evenings*



*Bring down heaven's kisses,
Making us feel anew that she is our own,
 the darling of our hearts.
The stillness of her shades is stirred
 by the woodland whisper ;
Her āmlakī groves quiver
 with the rapture of leaves.
She dwells in us, around us, however far
 we may wander ;
She weaves our hearts in a song
 making us one in music,
Turning our strings of love with her own fingers,
And we ever remember that she is our own,
 the darling of our hearts.*

(English translation by the Poet)

This sense of comradeship, on true reflection, seems to have developed along two parallel lines. On the one hand, it sets the seal of a certain group distinctiveness on the products of the school, a certain pattern of behaviour, the hint of being a favoured class, an *élite*. Fortunately, the atmosphere and training one receives at Sāntiniketan produce also a contrary tendency. The ideals of Tagore are still a vital factor permeating life at Sāntiniketan. Freedom from all forms of bigotry or sectarianism and a broad humanism are essential ingredients of the atmosphere of Sāntiniketan. It is also the basic of its social life.

The Poet's mind was not slow to recognize this aspect of education. On the one hand, he proclaimed that his way was not that of renunciation that denies the world, that the freedom of the spirit which he sought was not the freedom of the recluse ; on the other hand he slowly but steadily deviated from the pristine concept of education as the path or self-realisation away from the din and bustle of life. He was not sure of his way even in 1921. And yet, as long ago as 1906, he was preaching the uselessness of a school that was removed from society. Today social education has attained a pedagogic status. In 1906, in the course of his discourse on the "Problems of Education", he developed the following thesis :

"Where the school is not at one with the entire social life, where it is an imposition on society, it is dry and lifeless. What we learn from it we learn with difficulty ; and when the time comes for its application we cannot use it effectively."



We learn our lessons by rote ; they have no relation to the people around us, no relevance to life."

This is as much applicable to the formal type of education imparted in the English-medium schools as to the type of schools that likes to thrive in an "ivory tower" atmosphere, the "*achalāyatana* of human futility".

The year 1906 was in the grip of the Swadeshi agitation. The sensitive mind of the Poet could not avoid its impact. In fact, he welcomed this impact and when the idea of national education was mooted, he threw himself heart and soul into the movement. He not only associated himself with the principle of the revolt against what he regarded, and what many of the intellectuals of the country regarded, as an alien, soul-less system of education set up to subserve British imperial interests ; he went into every detail of the scheme, even setting standard question papers for the prospective students of the "national" schools. The National Council of Education was set up. Apart from Rabindranath, men like Aurobindo Ghosh, Gooroodas Banerjee, Rash Behary Ghose and others joined the movement. Aurobindo was appointed Principal of the National College. Rabindranath addressed numerous meetings in support of the scheme and associated himself completely with this clear and dignified expression of the nation's will. He explained, he advised, he warned. Unfortunately, after a few years, the movement flagged and ultimately petered out. Of all the institutions that had been set up, only the Bengal Technical Institute remained. A little spark of vitality in it somehow escaped the indifference of time. It later sprouted forth, under more propitious circumstances, first into the Jadavpur College of Engineering and Technology and then grew into a full-fledged University which has established a new tradition in the history of education in modern India.

Now, this national upsurge deeply affected the mind and the outlook of the Poet. He accepted the idea of a 'national' education, though he warned that this movement should not take the form of "a negative protest", and exhaust itself in the boycott movement. Nor would he accept the plea that the new educational movement was directed against the British Government. "The truth is", said the Poet, "that in the heart of the country, there is somewhere a feeling of want ; the country hungers for something and



we are here to give it". In fact, the country was still not prepared to shoulder the responsibilities of this new educational movement. With the settlement of the question of partition, the country went to sleep over what could have become one of the most creative achievements in the sphere of national education in this country. Another countervailing factor was, perhaps, the emergence of Asutosh Mookerjee on the scene. His struggle in 1904 over the Calcutta University Bill was, in a sense, part of the national struggle. He fought the British with their own weapons. Even a hardened bureaucrat like Bamfylde Fuller had to eat the humble pie before the consummate skill of this Bengali Brahmin who combined in himself the best elements of both oriental and occidental cultures. He, in his own way, was a true path-breaker in the field of education in India.⁷

V

Viśva-Bhārati (1921)

If the aim of education is to make a complete man, it must keep on expanding its frontiers. It spreads from the home to the school, from the school to the University ; from the home to the larger area of life ; from the circle of one's own relations to the larger world of fellowship ; from the family to the community, from the community to the nation. Finally, the nation itself is unable to contain the march of the human spirit. In its final stage, it makes the whole of humanity its province.

The evolution of Rabindranath's ideas of education is also progressive. The failure of the national education scheme on which he had spent so much of his energy must have depressed his spirits. To some extent, however, he had his doubts about the outcome of the movement. In one of his writings, "Sikshār Āndolaner Bhūmikā" ("Introduction to Educational Agitation") published in a special issue of the *Bhāṇḍār* (November 1905), the Poet declared that all talks about national education would ultimately fail if the nation was not prepared to work for it properly. "There need not be any

⁷ See Chapter VIII.

regrets on that account", he wrote ; " there is no doubt that if the nation wants to live, it will sooner or later revive its efforts. Even if our present efforts fail, the history of this failure will have an educative value for future attempts."

The fact remains, however, that in 1908, Tagore withdrew from the political movement because of certain tendencies it had developed and which hurt the universalist in him.

Then came the first World War and the Poet's further disillusionment. The aggressive nationalism of the West set him re-thinking. Western nationalism, as distinct from what he calls the spirit of the West, is an organization simply of brute power and devoid of spiritual content. The spirit of Indian culture is, on the other hand, based on universalism. His " Nationalism " was, thus, a re-statement of values. The War made Tagore cross the threshold of nationalism. The spirit of internationalism-cum-humanism stepped over the narrow groove of nationalism. " The butterfly will have to be persuaded that the freedom of the sky is of a higher value than the shelter of the cocoon." To the Poet even *Swarāj* became an illusion, an abstraction. " Swaraj is not our objective. Our fight is a spiritual fight—it is for Man."

It was against this background when in the last and most characteristic phase of his ideological evolution, the *Viśva-Bhāratī* was founded in 1921.

Thus we find Tagore's philosophy of education becomes gradually invested with a social mission. Education has ceased to be something personal. It has even transcended the barriers of nationalism. It has become universal. The social mission remains, but society is now the human society at large. Knowledge in this context becomes a universal (international) co-operative enterprise. The new philosophy is based on harmony and truth, the unity of truth. Tagore's theory, thus, turned a full cycle.

Since India, in Tagore's view, is the true focus of Asian culture, it is her responsibility to see that the mind of Asia is brought to a correct focus. In his opinion nearly all the cultures of Asia sprang originally from India or came into India from the outside in the course of her long history (*Cf. " The Viśva-Bhāratī Ideal "*). In the West, the living spirit of the University " is widely spread in their society, their parliament, their literature and the numerous



activities of their corporate life". On the other hand, the Asian Universities were copies of the Western Universities ; they were not true centres of culture. It was India's obligation and privilege to bring the West and the East into an intellectual and spiritual co-partnership. Thus, as the focal point of Asian culture and due to her geographical position, India would be the ideal interpreter of the East to the West and of the West to the East.

How far the Poet had wished to make of *Visva-Bhārati* a research centre rather than a University is a matter of debate. But, in "The *Visva-Bhārati* Ideal", as its Memorandum lays down :

" The fuller idea of the *Visva-Bharati* now included the thought of a complete meeting of East and West, and in a common fellowship of learning and common spiritual striving for the unity of the human race. The stress was now to be laid on the idea of humanity itself."

Knowledge and mutual understanding by the West and the East of each other's culture were for Tagore the only way to base the relation between the two on a creative exchange of values.

As this point I make no apology from quoting from the Memorandum of Association (Objects) of *Visva-Bhārati* :

" To study the Mind of Man in its realisation of different aspects of truth from diverse points of view.

" To bring into more intimate relation with one another, through patient study and research, the different cultures of the East on the basis of their underlying unity.

" To approach the West from the standpoint of such a unity of the life and thought of Asia.

" To seek to realise in a common fellowship of study the meeting of the East and the West, and thus ultimately to strengthen the fundamental conditions of world peace through the establishment of free communication of ideas between the two.

" And with such ideals in view to provide at Santiniketan aforesaid a Centre of Culture where research into and study of the religion, literature, history, science and art of Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, Islamic, Sikh and other civilizations may be pursued along with the culture of the West, with that simplicity in externals which is necessary for true spiritual realisation, in amity, good fellowship and co-operation between the thinkers and scholars of both Eastern and Western countries, free from all antagonisms of race, nationality, creed or caste and in the name of the One Supreme Being who is *Santam, Sivam, Advaitam*."

An elaboration of this theme (as laid down in the Memorandum) is given by the Poet in his essay on " An Eastern University " published in 1922. He writes :

" So, in one centre of Indian learning, we must provide for the co-ordinate study of all these different cultures, the Vedic, the Puranic, the Buddhist, the Jain,

the Islamic, the Sikh and the Zoroastrian. The Chinese, the Japanese and Tibetan will also have to be added ; for in the past, India did not remain isolated within her own boundaries. . . . Side by side with them must finally be placed the Western Culture."

In this way the assimilation of the cultures of the East and the West will be possible. In this way, perhaps, the Universal Man will emerge on the soil of India. She will once again preach the essential Unity of Man amidst all the diversities of race, religion and culture. " My own inspiration for my own country", Tagore wrote in a letter, " is that the mind of India should join its forces to the great movement of mind which is in the present-day world. Viśva-Bhāratī would reflect that movement ". The motto of the Viśva-Bhāratī became :

" *Yatra Viśvam Bhabatyekanidam* "

—where the whole world nestles together. Today the great organization comprises the following institutions :

Pātha-Bhavana (School) ;

Sikshā-Bhavana (College) ;

Vidyā-Bhavana (Research Institute) ;

Rabindra-Bhavana (Museum and Institute of Research on Rabindranath) ;

Cheenā-Bhavana (Sino-Indian Institute) ;

Kalā-Bhavana (Fine Arts and Crafts Institute) ;

Sangit Bhavana (School of Music and Dance) ;

Hindi Bhavana (School of Hindi Studies and Research).

Besides these, there are also the *Silpa-Bhavana* and the Institute of Rural Reconstruction at Sriniketan. It remains only to add that Viśva-Bhāratī manages its own press and publication department.

VI

Viśva-Bhāratī University (1951)

It was in 1951 that Viśva-Bhāratī was recognized as a University and empowered to hold examinations and award diplomas and degrees. The chief executive officer now is the Vice-Chancellor while the Prime Minister of India is the *ex-officio* Chancellor. Before it was officially recognised as a University in its own right, the position



of Viśva-Bhārati was somewhat ambiguous. At first Viśva-Bhārati existed side by side with Sāntiniketan, more or less as an adjunct to it, as an institute of higher study and research. Later, a college (Śikshā-Bhabana) was added, Viśva-Bhārati continuing as a Research Institute. Previously, the students of Sāntiniketan were individually privileged to sit for the Matriculation Examination of the Calcutta University. It was in 1925 that Sāntiniketan became, for all practical purposes, a school recognized by the Government. A similar recognition was granted to the post-matriculate collegiate studies at the Viśva-Bhārati. Until its recognition as a Central University in 1951, it had virtually been functioning as an affiliate of the Calcutta University.

This gradual transformation demonstrated one thing, namely, that students or guardians cannot remain long satisfied simply with an idealistic approach towards education. They would, before long, want a more concrete, public recognition of their education and training. They would want certificates and diplomas that would provide an entry to a highly competitive world where graduates from other Universities would pose a constant challenge to merit and competence. With the statutory recognition of Viśva-Bhārati in 1951, the last trace of ambiguity regarding its status was removed. In the opinion of Dr. Sasadhar Sinha, himself an alumnus of Sāntiniketan, the authorities of Viśva-Bhārati by this means, "sought and found, without undue sacrifice of ideals, the only sensible way out of their predicament". The students' interests, Dr. Sinha adds, had to be safeguarded at all costs.

I am not quite sure how the ideals which the Poet had cherished in 1901 or even in 1921, could remain untarnished in the mutation that they suffered in 1951. No doubt, it is a University with a difference. It still indulges in what would appear to be certain characteristic practices. The spirit of the Poet still broods over it. But the spark of life no longer spreads the same radiance as when the Poet was its Friend, Philosopher and Guide.

VII
Sriniketan

Sriniketan, the name given to the Institute of Rural Instruction, at Surul, a few miles from Bolpur, testifies to the versatility of the

Poet. He was an idealist, a pedagogue, a pragmatist, all in one, in his attitude towards education. Sriniketan showed the pragmatist in him.

Just as his own experience at school was responsible for the birth of Sāntiniketan, so was his experience of the countryside at Silāidah and Potisar responsible for the birth of Sriniketan which literally means the "Abode of Lakshmi", a name which is known to have been first suggested by Leonard K. Elmhirst, Tagore's friend and collaborator in this field. Thus the idea of Lakshmi and Saraswati, Sriniketan and Sāntiniketan, living together as two sisters, caught the fancy of the Poet. Here, again, is another instance of the social slant to education which was, particularly during the War years, modifying Tagore's individualistic philosophy.

Sriniketan was the result of patient study and work. It was hard work from the beginning. From Silāidah the Poet got the inspiration to do something to help the villagers. "If I can free one or two villages from the bonds of ignorance and weakness," he wrote, "there will be built, on a tiny scale, an ideal for the whole of India." Here was the practical idealist who had got the size of the problem and knew the limitations of his own capacity. Surul, Shewagram, Wardha—these are villages that will forever adorn the map of India's educational experiments.

The practical principle followed at Surul was the age-old dictum : God helps those who help themselves. But God usually helps through His agents. The Poet wanted to say, in effect, "Help us to help yourself". For what the villagers need is vigorous leadership that knows what to do, and a strong stimulant to dissolve the soporific effects of age-old apathy—the placid, pathetic contentment of the masses—by personal example. Apart from Elmhirst, others who came to the help of Tagore in this arduous task were Kalimohan Ghosh, a former teacher at Sāntiniketan whom Elmhirst found "invaluable", Santosh Majumdar, (Miss) Gretchen Green and a few others, all devoted, selfless workers. The principles learnt in building up this rural reconstruction centre have now become the stock-in-trade of all rural development work. These are :

First, there must be a proper survey of the field selected for work. This would include investigations into the social



and economic life of the people, and the assessment of their needs at home, village and fields.

Secondly, the ignorance and the ill-health of the villagers which bedevil all programmes of social work must be attacked at the outset in right earnest. To this is to be added the apathy of the villager and his instinctive resistance to schemes of improvement. The suspicion has to be removed by direct, personal and sympathetic contact with the villagers.

Thirdly, the villagers must be taught self-respect and self-help. This should start with the education of the village boys and girls. The active co-operation of the village people must be sought.

The following were the constituents of the centre :

1. The *Sikshā-Satra*, a boarding school up to the secondary standard. The boys start with the three R's, do the chores "in dormitory, kitchen, garden, poultry-run and dairy". Besides the three R's, they have to learn carpentry and one other craft. The training in craft has no mercenary motive, nor is it intended to make the school self-supporting. This incidentally distinguishes it from Gandhiji's scheme of basic education. The aim of *Sikshā-Satra* was to discover and encourage creative talent. The boys were also encouraged to take part in games, singing and acting. A scout movement was also organized with the idea of promoting a spirit of social service. The boys (scouts) were known as *brati-bālakas* and the girls *brati-bālikās*. All this added up to Tagore's conception of Basic Education.

2. The desire to fight ill health in the village led to the provision of medical aid at a nominal cost. The idea started with a clinic which was placed under the charge of Miss Gretchen Green, an American lady. Another American, Dr. Harry Timbers, a Quaker, worked on the eradication of malaria. These simple beginnings later grew into a rural health service.

3. Co-operative grain stores or *dharma-golās* were set up.

4. Provision for training experts. Those who came either to train or to work included a variety of local craftsmen, some



with considerable skill. A Japanese named Kasahara, who was a carpenter-gardener, also joined the staff. The reputation of Sriniketan's woodwork owes much to Kasahara.

The whole system of Sriniketan worked on the voluntary principle, that is to say, nothing was sought to be imposed on any individual. The atmosphere was one of experimentation. The good name that the institution secured for its products points to the success of the experiment.

VII

Concluding Remarks

It has been a difficult task to compress within the compass of a few pages a detailed account of the path-breaking experiments that Rabindranath had originated in the field of education both at Sāntiniketan and Sriniketan. There is no doubt that he brought new ideas to bear on educational theory. In the process, he had to revise or otherwise fill up the gaps in his own early views on education. Originally intended to rescue the child from the rigours and the miseries of a formal, almost mechanical, system of primary and secondary education and to build up a new system on the vital, play-life of a child who would find his teacher in Nature, his educational philosophy underwent a series of transformations until it became permeated with a broad humanism based on the essential unity of mankind. His experiment at Sriniketan also developed into a field of international co-operation for removing the ignorance and ill-health of the villagers and making use of his skill for creative purposes. Tagore gave us a practical demonstration of basic education. Here also the perspective transcended the boundaries of the tiny village of Surul. "Fulfil this idea in a few villages only," he wrote, "and I will say these few villages are my India".

And yet somehow these pioneering projects have left our countrymen more or less passive. This did not square with the deep respect and veneration that Tagore commanded as no other Indian, except perhaps Gandhiji, could. The result was that the Government had to step in to save these institutions from inanition and decay. Attempts are still being made to preserve the basic values that the Poet had



cherished so much. But, however sincere and well-meaning these attempts may be, they are poor substitutes for what the Poet in his vision wanted to create and for which he called for the support of his countrymen in his creative effort. In the process he almost impoverished himself. Today the Government is generously financing the Viśva-Bhārati University, but its position is almost like that of "Trīśāṅku" who is supposed to be hovering midway between heaven and hell. It no longer answers to the idealism of Tagore ; nor have its alumni been able to make any visible, significant impact on the people of this country. Nor, as a University, has it been able to make its grade either in its academic attainments or in the achievements of its research activities, except over a limited field. So far as Śrīniketan is concerned, its functions are now being absorbed in Government sponsored programmes including the National Extension Service. The only welcome sign is that the products manufactured at Śrīniketan still command all-India, if not world-wide, prestige for their charm and beauty.

Perhaps, in this, as in much else, Sāntiniketan and Viśva-Bhārati both have fallen victims to the depressing loss of faith and belief that characterise the present so-called cultured classes. Or is it that the "World-weariness" of a sophisticated generation, thoroughly jaded with the unending pettiness of existence, is stultifying all progressive movements in society including those in the field of art and culture ? The real malaise lies deeper ; for it is an affliction of the soul of India. If there is a single cause of this decadence, it is the spiritual vacuum that atrophies all noble endeavours which we are prone to disown with a mere shrug of the shoulders. One can understand blind conformism. One can also understand the defiance or the iconoclasm of a rebellious spirit. But one cannot understand the coldness, the attitude of non-belief, the complacency of mind, that is too lazy to exert itself, that freezes every genial current of the soul. Who will rescue the dead from death ?



CHAPTER VII

INDIAN PATH-BREAKERS IN EDUCATION

(2) MAHATMA GANDHI

I

An Aspect of Gandhian Philosophy

Mahatma Gandhi was as much of a revolutionary in the field of education as he was in the political field, and in either field, he was a revolutionary with a difference. He was a visionary with the zeal of a pragmatist, a theorist with a practical flair. In the field of education, he was mainly concerned with what he called primary education but which in effect covered a period up to the secondary standard of school education. But he advocated a type of education which in its aims, content and syllabi, was to be radically different from the type prevalent in the country. It gave India the promise of giving free and compulsory education up to the age of 14 without any strain on the financial resources of the country and independent of Government aid. This was in the 'thirties of the present century when the British Government was firmly on the saddle. How would he have managed it against every kind of adverse circumstances is now a speculation of history. A new generation has now grown up since Gandhiji pronounced his scheme, who, I am afraid, have a hazy idea of what was then regarded as a revolutionary and a bold path-breaking attempt to cross the barrier of mass illiteracy and ignorance. Forty years later, we are still grappling with the problem of removing mass illiteracy and have spent crores of rupees for the purpose. For instance, during the three Plan periods, that is, from 1951 to 1966, we have spent an amount in the neighbourhood of Rs. 400 crores on elementary education (for the age group 6-11) alone. Gandhiji would have been shocked at our performance.

Though Gandhiji's interest lay mainly in the field of primary education, which as I have stated, included education up to the secondary stage, his contributions to the theory of higher education, though not spelt out in so much detail as in the other field, were also of a significant nature. Here also, as we shall see later, he proposed to make education more or less independent of any support from the



public exchequer. But in his scale of values he very definitely gave a secondary position to Collegiate or University education. His views on education were presented, with characteristic brevity and clarity in successive issues of "The Harijan," the weekly journal which he edited. In its issue dated the 13th July, 1937, he wrote : " If all the collegians were of a sudden to forget their knowledge, the loss sustained by the sudden lapse of the memory of, say, a few lakhs of collegians would be as nothing compared to the loss that the nation has sustained through the ocean of darkness that surrounds three hundred millions." There is clearly a hyperbolic element in this observation. But it underlines Gandhiji's passionate zeal for solving the problem of mass illiteracy and ignorance, and for giving it the highest priority in the educational schemes of the country. In his concluding address to the Educational Conference at Wardha on October 22, 1937, he said : " I think we can postpone the question of higher education for some time ; but the problem of primary education cannot be postponed even for a minute." Of the four " propositions " formulated by Gandhiji for consideration of that Conference, only one dealt with higher education. In the draft resolutions that were subsequently placed before the Conference for its acceptance, there was none dealing with higher education. This pre-occupation of the Conference with primary education was quite understandable. It was born out of the impatience at the tardy progress of mass education in our country under British Rule, with only 30 per cent. of the boys (not to speak of girls) in the age-group 5-10 attending schools. It was, I think, Poet Tagore who had said that where the inferior constituted the major element in any set-up, the good were also pulled down by the sheer force of gravity. Nowhere is this observation more apposite than in the field of education. As regards the tardiness even in achieving this absurdly low rate of progress, the less said, the better. According to the Census of 1921, only 8.2 per cent. of the total population aged 5 and over were " literates ". In 1931, the percentage was 9.2. In the Charter Act of 1813, the Government had provided a sum of one lakh of rupees for the encouragement of education in British India. A century later, the expenditure on primary education was Rs. 2.07 crores per annum, while in 1927, it rose to Rs. 7 crores, the average cost working out at Rs. 6 per head per year of the



school-going population of British India. In the 600 Indian States, with a few honourable exceptions, the picture of illiteracy, of lack of school education, was equally dismal, if not more so. With this background of half-hearted efforts to create a makebelieve of progress, Gandhiji proposed that education should be compulsory and free for every child up to the age of 14, that it should be made independent of Government aid. He further wanted to make this education self-supporting, with its basis in the training of some handicraft which, apart from its role in making education self-supporting, should be prized for its own value as "the spearhead of a silent social revolution".

From this course, Gandhiji would banish English. We have to recall that Gandhiji's primary education covered the age group 7-14 which, in the final year would correspond to class VIII of the present secondary standard. In fact, Gandhiji wanted to bring up the education of boys attaining the age of 14 to the then matriculation standard which, under the existing system, is ordinarily reached by boys of 16 or over. When asked by a questioner as to how that would be possible, Gandhiji put this counter-question : "What is your secondary education but compelling the poor boys in a foreign language to learn in seven years what they should learn in the course of a couple of years in their own mother-tongue?" (*Harijan*, 21-8-37). We shall have occasion to dwell on the rights and wrongs of this proposal to abolish English from the educational system as a medium of instruction. Here it is sufficient to point out that it formed part of his overall approach towards solving the problem of education for the masses.

What Gandhiji was preaching in the columns of the *Harijan* and elsewhere formed his philosophy of education which was based on his experience of the educational methods he had followed elsewhere. It embodied certain principles which were known as the "Segaon Method". In order to help our understanding of Gandhiji's theoretical formulations which formed the matrix, as it were, of the Wardha scheme, the main points of the scheme (as summarised by Sri K. G. Mashruwala and published in the issue of the *Harijan*, dated 4.12.37) are reproduced in the next section of this chapter. It would be seen that Gandhiji's formulations were village-based, as it was bound to be, considering that India, at that time, had 700,000 villages where



ninety per cent. of her population lived. But Gandhiji thought that the principles of the Segaon Method could be applied, with appropriate changes, also to higher stages of education. These formulations provided the framework of the Wardha scheme also. These were based on : (i) a seven-year course of primary education covering the age-group 7-14 and brought up to the standard of middle and high-school education (which at present cover the age group 6-17) *minus* English ; (ii) the principle of compulsory education for all students of the age-group 7-14 and (iii) training in some craft or crafts to make the education self-supporting with Government providing facilities for marketing the products.

These formulations, as we shall further see, look simple and straight-forward at first sight except that many of his critics had misgivings about the propriety as well as the feasibility of the scheme of a self-supporting craft-based elementary education. It is now well-known that Gandhiji's attraction for handicrafts, though based on sound economic reasons and a pragmatic approach to the problem of rural education was matched by his repugnance for the machine, or rather the machine age, as the symbol of exploitation and violence. Handicrafts are in accord with the philosophy of non-violence. This is an integral aspect of Gandhian philosophy. It was Shri Mahadev Desai who made this significant declaration at the Wardha Conference : " Those who talk of machine age do not know of the danger ahead of us and labour under the illusion that socialisation tacked on to industrialisation is the solution of all evils. But I may tell you that socialisation cannot eradicate the inherent evils of industrialisation, and it is necessary that socialisation should be tacked on to a handicraft-civilization and not to factory civilization." One would suppose that this was the ideological background of the Segaon Method as well as of the Wardha Scheme.

II

"The Segaon Method"

Shri Mashruwala in the issue of the *Harijan* dated 4.12.37, described the Segaon Method in a series of numbered paragraphs. For facility of understanding, I am reproducing the paragraphs :

1. The Segaoon Method is the name given to the Principles and System of Education enunciated by Mahatma Gandhi.
2. It is the application of the law of Non-violence in the training of the child as a prospective citizen of the world.
3. It is claimed that the method is applicable with appropriate changes, to children of all countries and classes where the military spirit is to be substituted by the peaceful. Anyway it is the only proper system for the people of India.
4. Its aim is to make the child share the obligations of citizenship from the earliest age at which it begins to show some power of discrimination.
5. The centre of the Method lies in a productive industry. All training will be principally through the medium of and in correlation with such industry. Thus history, geography, mathematics, physical and social sciences and general literature will centre round and be related to that industry. Other matters in the above subjects will not be omitted, but greater emphasis will be laid on the former.
6. Industry will not be only the means and medium of instruction ; but, to the extent it is an inevitable condition of human life, it will also be an end of instruction, so that the aim will be to inculcate in the pupil a sense of the dignity of all manual labour—even scavenging—and the duty of earning an honest livelihood by labour.
7. It shall be the aim of the teacher to bring out the moral, rational and physical capacities of the child through the industry it is taught.
8. Social sciences and hygiene will not be taught as mere class room subjects, but by planning joint and several programmes of service to the whole village not excluding the dumb creatures. The school shall be the centre for the radiation of culture to the surrounding society.
9. The Method may be shortly summed up in the phrase, " From the hand and the senses to the brain and the heart, and from the school to the society and God."
10. It is held that three to four hours' joint daily labour in the corporate life of a school is a healthy and educative engagement for children of both the sexes, whatever the class they come from. " In the interests of both science and industry, as well as of society as a whole, every human being, without distinction of birth, ought to

receive such an education as would enable him or her to combine a thorough knowledge of science with a thorough knowledge of handicraft." (*Kropotkin*)

11. Under the present system most people do not know even at the end of their college career what they will do after completing their studies. Young boys and girls, unless their material circumstances are hopelessly adverse, pass on from primary to secondary schools, and from secondary schools to colleges at an enormous expense, not for the love of cultural and other education which the schools and colleges profess to give, but simply because they do not know what else they should or can do. They go on with their studies merely in order to put off till the last day the difficult question of settling the main career of life. More than twenty years of the growing period of life spent in such aimless manner must inculcate in the pupil habits of procrastination, hesitation, irresoluteness and inability to take decisions in the pursuits of life. The Segaoon Method will aim to bring about in the child at as early an age as possible the determination of the future career it should expect to pursue, and will arm him with at least one occupation, which will give him a wage enough for a healthy subsistence.

12. In the Segaoon Method, literacy (that is, information on various matters through reading and writing, and capacity to follow logical or pseudo-logical controversy) is not considered knowledge or even the medium of knowledge, but is regarded only as a symbolical representation of knowledge as well as accomplished ignorance. The knowledge of these symbols is necessary and useful if the sources of knowledge are alive. It will be the aim of the Segaoon Method to keep these sources alive. The means of doing so are work, observation, experience, experiment, service and love. Without these learning through books acts as a hindrance to the development of the spiritual and rational faculties of the student, and impairs his physique.

13. The Basic Course under the Segaoon Method should include a good knowledge of the mother tongue, a fair acquaintance with its literature, a working knowledge of the national language of India, a general knowledge of such subjects as mathematics, history, geography, physical and social sciences, drawing, music, drill, sports, gymnastics, etc., as well as of a vocation to a degree which should

enable an average student to start a modest career, and a zealous and bright student, if he will, take up a course of higher general or vocational training. It should not include at that stage English or such academical courses of other subjects as are not generally required in practical life, are not absolutely essential for the training of the intellect, or are not necessary as a fair background for further self-education.

14. The Basic Course should extend to not less than seven years, and may be a little more, if necessary. If the schools become self-supporting, as explained later on, and if the guardians also get something out of it, the maintenance of boys for a longer period will present no obstacle to the parents.

15. Underlying the Segaon Method, there are a few fundamental principles regarding the Functions and Duties of the State and the minimum living wage. They are stated in the following paragraphs.

16. A State is not worth its name, if it cannot usefully employ all adults willing to work for it and trained by it under a measure of compulsion, and pay them the minimum wage necessary for healthy subsistence.

17. Under the present market rates, it is held that the living minimum age for India should not be less than one anna for each hour of work at the average speed.

18-21. (These paragraphs criticise the present society and government for their failure to come up to this standard and suggest that in order to achieve this, the government "should establish its hold over at least one such industry in which it can employ practically an unlimited number of workers," that is, the hand-spinning and hand-weaving industry.)

22. It is also necessary that the wage should increase all round at least to the level of the minimum living wage. The Government must gather strength and people must co-operate to make this possible.

23. The minimum wage mentioned above is the adult's wage. For a pupil of a primary school it is taken to be 1/2 anna per hour.

24. Reckoning on an average three hours of work per day for about nine months in the year, the test of the efficiency of Segaon Scheme should be that a full school of not less than seven classes, with on an average of 25 persons per class and eight or nine members

on the staff, should be able to earn the annual salaries of the staff from the products manufactured in the school. The minimum salary of a teacher is expected to be Rs. 25 per month (in no case should it be less than Rs. 20).

25. The capacity of the pupil must be increased and the implements and methods of instruction must be improved until at least this standard of efficiency is reached.

26. With the school age reckoned as above, there is no apprehension of the school products entering into competition with private artisans' products at the present village wage. By the time the village wages rise to the standard expected above, the same progress in capacity and implements will have been made by the village artisan also. Consequently the apprehension of competition seems groundless.

27. The school wage mentioned above must for the present be guaranteed by the State. At any rate it should be at a par with the rates prescribed by the A.I.S.A.¹ and the A.I.V.I.A.² and progress with them, till it reaches for the basic school the standard of half-an-anna per hour. For the present, this will seem like subsiding the school in an indirect manner and, according to present market prices, be felt as a financial burden on the Government. But it is felt that there is so much room for improvement in the capacity and implements of workers that within a period of five years, it should be possible for the school as well as private artisans (who take to similar training and implements) to rightfully earn the minimum wage desired for them, without making the products appreciably more costly than what they are now.

28. The principle that the school must be self-supporting in the sense explained above, has not been laid down from merely economic considerations, but because it will provide a practical test of the efficiency of the school as an educational institution on its vocational side.

29. The method as outlined above has been worked out mainly for the Basic Education through the Khadi industry. Other in-

¹ The All-India Spinners' Association.

² The All-India Village Industries Association.

dustries are not to be discouraged or neglected ; only there are not enough data for working out other handicrafts.

30. The principles of the Segaon Method can be applied, with appropriate changes, also to higher stages of education. All education should have a self-supporting factor in its scheme. In the higher stages, either the institution must be supported by the pupil's labour or fees or the pupil must be able to support himself from his school or other labour, if he does not pay fees.

These formulations of the Segaon Method derive importance from the fact that the conclusions of the Wardha Conference and the Gandhian scheme of craft-based self-supporting type of primary education which the Conference discussed were clearly based on these formulations with certain modifications. As this Conference did not produce any blue-print of its views on higher education, but confined itself to the preparation of a scheme of primary education only, a brief examination of the implications of the reference to higher education contained in the last paragraph of the above formulations will not be irrelevant.

Gandhiji, by his own admission, was not concerned with higher education but with the education of "three hundred millions" surrounded by an "ocean of darkness". In an article published in *The Harijan* of the 13th July, 1937, he wrote : "If all the collegians were of a sudden to forget their knowledge, the loss sustained by the sudden lapse of the memory of, say, a few lakhs of collegians would be as nothing compared to the loss that the nation has sustained through the ocean of darkness that surrounds three hundred millions." Even then he would "revolutionize" college education. He would not have the State spend any money on the same. So far as the Arts Colleges were concerned, no difficulty would arise since these Colleges were "mostly well-endowed and self-supporting". Engineering Colleges would be attached to industries "which should pay for the training of the graduates they need". So also the Commerce Colleges which should be attached to big commercial and industrial organizations. Medical Colleges should be attached to "certified" hospitals and supported by voluntary contributions from "monied men". Agricultural Colleges should be self-supporting. It is evident that Gandhiji looked upon higher education from the point of view of finance. He had little pedagogic interest in it. He



would leave higher education to private enterprise or for meeting national requirements simply because he would not like the State to spend lavishly on such education. Even the Universities "will not cost the State anything except that it will bear the cost of running a Central (?) Education Department"! The State Universities "should be purely examining bodies", self-supporting through the fees charged for examinations. They will look after the whole of the field of education and will prepare and approve courses of study in the various departments of education. Starting of private schools should be subject to the sanction of the Universities. University Charters should be given liberally to people to proved worth and integrity, provided, of course, they do not cost the State anything.³

Obviously, these views were embryonic, or perhaps Gandhiji was merely thinking aloud. In any case, while the views quoted above contained many points of interest and the country could possibly have had a new lead on this question if they had been elaborated with as much care as the formulations of the Segaon Method on primary education or the conclusions of the Wardha Scheme. The main point of interest was whether Gandhiji had any integrated picture of the education of a citizen, from the primary to the post-graduate stage, in his mind. The view that the Segaon Method could be applied, *with appropriate changes*, to the stages of higher education also naturally raised the question as to what changes he had in view. The quotation given above would suggest that while all the Arts Colleges were to be left to their devices, the technological or professional institutions were to be converted into a kind of trade-guilds where there should be training in certain skills rather than education. The Universities, instead of being centres of higher learning and research, would, under this formula, be reduced to pure examining bodies. This would appear to be a call for retrogression from the ideals of University education cherished all over the world. Even the alternative type of higher education that Gandhiji contemplated gave no indication as to how it was to be related to or integrated with the system of primary education that he had in view. One thing, however, is clear. Gandhiji wanted practical results more than anything else. He had little

³ See *The Harijan* (October 2, 1937).

use for graduates educated in subjects that had little or no practical application and so were good for nothing. An industrial trainee or apprentice at Tata's, or a commercial probationer with a Trades Association or a Chamber of Commerce, or a medical interne at a good hospital would combine education with training that would stand him in good stead in practical life, and to that extent, his own views, at any rate, represented an integrated practical approach.

The Gandhian philosophy of education is to be found chiefly in his concept of Basic Education. Gandhiji said :

" My plan to impart Primary Education through the medium of village handi-crafts like spinning and carding, etc., is thus conceived as the spearhead of a silent social revolution, fraught with the most far-reaching consequences. It will provide a healthy and moral basis of relationship between the city and the village and thus go a long way towards eradicating some of the worst evils of the present social insecurity and poisoned relationship between the classes. It will check the progressive decay of our villages and lay the foundation of a juster division between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots' and everybody will be assured of a living wage and the right to freedom. And all this will be accomplished without the horror of a bloody class war or a colossal capital expenditure as would be involved in the mechanization of a vast continent like India. Nor would it entail a helpless dependence on foreign imported machinery or technical skill. Lastly, by obviating the necessity of highly specialised talent, it would place the destiny of the masses, as it were, in their own hands."¹

How prophetic these words, though there were so many 'i's to be dotted and so many 't's to be crossed.

If the necessity of primary education, in general, and its priority for a poor and backward country like India in particular, is accepted, the question of resources comes in. Some critics of the scheme have strongly opposed the idea of making primary education self-supporting which they condemned as being mercenary in approach. The main point was that Gandhiji wanted urgently to make primary education *free* and *compulsory*. That would ordinarily mean a very substantial assistance from the State exchequer. Where was the money to be found? By scrapping prohibition, as some friends said. No, said Gandhi : If money was to be raised, it could be found in other ways, by steeper rates of income tax, by inheritance taxes, by death duties. But Gandhiji felt the air of urgency in the situation. Education could be self-supporting only by relating it to some useful craft. This was suggested not out of a mercenary

¹ See Gandhi : *Basic National Education*.



motive. On the other hand, training given to the children in a useful vocation would enable it to be utilised "as a means for cultivating their mental, physical and spiritual faculties". It was to be, as already noted, "the spearhead of a silent social revolution".

Gandhiji's scheme was thus not merely educational in purpose but had a moral and spiritual content. Such a purpose would be completely frustrated if it were to be financed out of the proceeds of the liquor revenue. The question arose because of the way Gandhiji wanted to make education self-supporting. His idea was that children working at a craft should be paid for their labour and their earnings should go towards the payment of teachers' salaries. Today prohibition is our accepted goal. It is a constitutional directive. And yet, even now, there are talks of scrapping prohibition together with mounting resistance against enforcement of prohibition where it has not yet been applied. The problem is one of foregoing the revenue derived from it, of its revenue potential. "We have to solve it," said Gandhiji, "and the solution must not involve the compromise of our ideal of prohibition, cost whatever it may". When it was pointed out to him that prohibition had failed in America he hit back by saying that the point was that even America where drinking was not looked upon as a vice, had tried the experiment of Prohibition but in this country all the religions held it reprehensible and "it is not the millions who drink but individuals who drink". This was in 1937 when the State could not spend more than Rs. 6/7 crores on primary education. Even today, when we are spending more than Rs. 40 crores a year on primary education alone, we have not been able to give effect to the constitutional directive of making education up to the age of 14 years free and compulsory. Naturally, Gandhiji, in order to realise his dream, within the shortest possible time, had to provide for an inexpensive type of education and to make it self-supporting.

III

The "Folkehojskole"

The Segaoon Method, the Method evolved at Sewagram (and later turned into a State Policy), purported to fix a craft-based pro-

gramme of education for boys from the age of 7 to 14 or a little more. Apart from the craft, the basic course, as laid down in paragraph 13 of Shri Masruwalla's summary, provided for a fairly comprehensive general education up to the secondary standard (minus English). It was intended to be self-supporting and self-sufficient education, to enable an average student, after completion of the education, to start "a modest career".

The question is, what happened after the boy had reached the age of 14 or so and successfully completed the education prescribed for him ? Was a "modest career" the final objective of such education ? Of course, the Segaon Method was careful to fix this goal for an "average" student. For "a zealous and bright student," the education he had received would enable him, if he so wanted, to take up a course of higher general or vocation training. Neither the Segaon Method, nor, if we are allowed to anticipate, the Wardha Scheme, made any provision for a higher course. The point is whether an institution of higher education, say, a College or University, is likely to consider a student aged 14, however bright or zealous he may be (unless he happens to be an acknowledged genius), rather young and immature for admission to a University course. The general consensus is that the age of entry to a College should not be less than 16. In European countries as well as in the United States, it is usually eighteen.

Here, then, was an educational vacuum which a boy who had attained the age of 14 was likely to face immediately after he had completed his school education according to the Segaon Method, if, that is, he wanted to proceed to higher education. What was he going to do between the ages 14-16, and what kind of higher educational centre would he be allowed to join ? Would he have to pass the School Final or the Higher Secondary Course Examination ?

This brings us to the idea of the "Folkehojskole" which may be considered as Denmark's answer to our question in anticipation, as it were, about 100 years ago. The Folkehojskole has been translated by A. H. Hollman as "The Folk High School," and as "People's College" by P. H. Holm-Jensen. The Indian Universities Commission (Radhakrishnan Commission), 1948, speaks very highly of the Folkehojskole idea and has given a short and interesting account of it in appendix (P) to the main Report with the idea that it would



be "appropriate to a study of Indian Universities". The Commission points out that the conditions under which the idea came into being were strikingly similar to those in India in the recent past. "The manner in which the Founder of the People's College programme," the Commission writes, "promoted his ideas, and the ideas themselves, are strikingly similar to those of Gandhiji and his Basic education".

The originator of the People's College idea was Nocolai F. S. Grundtvig who was born in 1783 and died at the age of 89. "Something is rotten in the State of Denmark"—this was a literal description of the country at that time. She was sunk in illiteracy and poverty and was caught in a general spirit of disillusionment and frustration. The following description, in the words of the Radhakrishnan Commission, will, perhaps, give a better idea of the "rotten state" of Denmark :

"Culturally the Danes had lost their bearing. Everything foreign was in high favour. The native language was being displaced by that of the nation which had recently defeated Denmark. Defeated in War, in 1813 the nation was officially declared bankrupt. Norway seceded, after 400 year of Union. Educated Danes were completely under the influence of foreign scholarship. Instead of being aroused by these conditions, the Danish people sank into hopeless apathy, expecting national extinction."⁵

It was to rescue the common people of Denmark from the depths of this cultural negation that Grundtvig conceived the idea of the People's College and began to travel from one end of the country to the other to popularise the idea. This idea had a national as well as a pedagogic slant. Grundtvig saw that "undefined impressions" of a foreign culture led young educated Danes to overlook their own culture and they were attracted by "the lure of an assured livelihood" in service under the foreign Government. Success at the examinations qualified them for such service resulting in an "educated caste," alien to the common mass of the people who were left in ignorance in order to slave for them. Grundtvig thus developed a hatred for examinations and for the "unlovely book-worm type" who were "mentally sterile". At that time, a University degree was required

⁵ See Report of the Indian Universities Commission, Vol. I, Appendix P., p. 713.

for most appointments under the Government. In fact, the utility of a University degree had come to be judged by its job-potential. How well this situation fits in with the conditions in India under British Rule ! The University, under such circumstances, tends to become " a scholastic reformatory ", as Grundtvig put it, " for the youth of the country ". " The only good school ", he said, " is the home of an able industrial man where a boy can learn to know and also to enjoy the work to which he will afterwards devote himself ". This, as we have seen, is a combination of our *Gurukula* idea with that of Segaoon. Grundtvig believed passionately in the " living word " and " would have his teachers live in with the students, talking with them and being examples to them ". Thus did the ancient Indian ideal of the *Guru* and his *āśrama*, or the *Guru* and the disciple, strike a chord in Grundtvig's heart without his being aware of it. At the same time, he kept alive in his mind the need for a national awakening which, according to him, must begin with the spiritual enlightenment of the common people. The mother tongue would be the ruling factor, the fatherland " the living centre to which all hearts must be drawn " ; these formed the motive force of his revolutionary philosophy. Here again we find the model which India also independently evolved about a hundred years later.

When Grundtvig first conceived the idea of a Folkehøjskole (People's College), he was barely 47. It was, however, not until 1951 that one of Grundtvig's disciples, Kristen Kolb, son of a shoemaker, founded the first People's College. It started with a capital of less than Rs. 2,000 and with 15 students. The building which housed the Folkehøjskole was put up by Kolb mostly with his own labour. It was a humble beginning but it transformed the pioneer's ideas into reality and spread the message that it could be done.

What arrests our attention is not only that there is so much similarity between the Danish idea of a People's College with our ancient educational system as well as the ideas preached by Gandhiji and, to an extent, Poet Tagore, but also that it had relevance to the question that we asked at the beginning of this section : what about the students of the age-group 14-16 ? The People's Colleges are conducted on the assumption that " it is well to have a break in schooling between the fourteenth and eighteenth year, or even more ". It is held by many in Denmark that " in this period of adolescence



and maturing, young people want to grapple with practical affairs, to become self-sufficient and self-reliant". Parents too feel that students should first learn the manual labour of their future occupations and should not join the People's Colleges "unless and until they have a strong desire for education". Perhaps some of us may feel that with this break of anything between 2 to 4 years, the desire for education will languish, then disappear. Actual experience, however, showed that the desire to learn sooner or later asserts itself without any urging. Indeed, as the Radhakrishnan Commission points out, this programme of "interrupted schooling" has been highly successful for rural boys in Denmark. It has not been so in the cities because of the distractions of city life. In this, again, we find a close parallelism between the Segaoon Method, primarily meant for the villages, and the Folkehojskole.

Now what is this People's College? These Colleges are private residential institutions for "adult young" people, chiefly from rural areas. Unlike the schools visualised at Segaoon, and later at Wardha, they are *not* vocational but cultural in their purpose. The Segaoon Method, of course, did not rule out culture but in so far as it aimed at a self-supporting type of education at the end of which the boys would be able to start "a modest career", its main purpose was undoubtedly vocational. This difference has to be noticed because while Gandhiji wanted his students, as young as 7 and not very much older than 14, to be trained in a craft or vocation, no such thought had occurred to the founders of the People's College movement. Unlike Gandhiji's schools, these Colleges would accept financial aid from the State on condition that the Government did not interfere with the internal management. But the Government laid down certain conditions before they would recognize a College for aid. One is that the school (or college) must have been in existence for at least 2 years and must have had, during each of these 2 years, at least 10 students. No student may be under 16 and not more than one fourth of the number may be under 18. The aid is in proportion to the number of students in the institution so that it is the students' support of a College that determines the amount of the grant. These institutions do not hold any examinations and offer no degrees. Therefore the problem of uniform tests does not arise.

Now, the main reason behind the fact that these Colleges are meant to be cultural rather than vocational (which we would have normally expected) is that it is presumed that those who enter these Colleges have already had learnt the manual labour of their future occupations and would not join these Colleges but for a strong desire for education. A typical College has about 125 students, though a few of the more popular ones may have two or three times as many. Another interesting point about these institutions is that most of them admit both men and women students but they have their classes at different times, the men from November to March, the women from May to July. A few are co-educational.

These Colleges are located in the open country but within easy reach, about one or two miles, from a village or a city. About 5 per cent. of the students come from towns and cities, the rest from villages and farms. The students live in, along with their teachers in the same building, with the Principal and his family having at least one meal a day with the students while the teachers have all their meals with the students at the same table and spend part of their evenings together. Thus an atmosphere of friendly intercourse develops among teachers and students as among the students themselves. This is also reflected in the absence of any problem of discipline.

As regards the curriculum of studies, the course includes the major fields of what is today called "general education", with literature, history, the art of government, the physical and biological sciences, and also practical school subjects to a greater or lesser degree. Lectures are very much in use though text books are not generally followed. "The secret of success with lectures seems to be the thorough mastery of the subject by the lecturer, his all-round education and his great interest in his work".*

Some of the results of the People's College movement are interesting. Most significant of these is that the speech of the common people which Grundtvig nurtured as a literary form has, we are told, become the language of literature. The academic language of a century ago has entirely disappeared and people can now express the highest thoughts in plain words, though international usage in regard to scientific or technical terms is recognised. It is also in-

* Radhakrishnan Report, Vol. I, Appendix P, p. 716.



teresting to observe that about 90 per cent. of the students who had received education at the People's Colleges go back to their home communities. It is stated that these Colleges are strengthening and refining rather than impoverishing, the rural life. The Danish farmer has become a scientist at his work and Denmark is like a big experiment station in agriculture. There is, in fact, an atmosphere of progress in every field, particularly in the push that it has given to co-operatives which has had the added result of reducing the country's dependence on the army of Government officials and employees that formerly controlled the people's affairs. All this, it is claimed, has been due to the intellectual and spiritual climate that the People's Colleges have helped to create.

The most outstanding achievement of the movement is that it has been the spearhead of a great democratic movement based on the gospel of self-reliance. Grundtvig appreciated the value to democracy of education for the common people. His mission, more or less fulfilled, is now about to yield to a newer outlook on education in this scientific age in the context of which the courses offered by the People's Colleges may look somewhat static, if not ante-dated. Whatever our present judgment may be, there is no doubt about the powerful role that the People's College movement has played in the history of Denmark at a critical period when its national soul was on the point of being lost, and that brought about a radical transformation in the life of the country. From the pedagogic point of view, it has been one of the boldest and most successful experiments in the history of education, both in its direct and indirect results.

In its revolutionary approach towards the problem of education, framing of the curricula, methods of teaching, teacher-pupil relations, the Danish Folkehojskole shares much of the theory that inspired the Segaoon Method of Mahatma Gandhi or the Sāntiniketan type of education as originally conceived by Tagore. But it starts where both Gandhiji and Tagore stopped in their concept of educating the child, and extended the application of the same theories to the education of the "young adults" of the age of 16 plus. Here was an institution—call it a school or a college—which waits for the child, as it passes through 2 to 4 years of creative experience in the pursuit of a vocation learnt at a school, to come back to get a higher and better type of knowledge that will make him a still better worker and



a still better citizen. This pattern of People's Colleges, in a country like India, which still shares with Denmark, as she was a century or more ago, the crippling disabilities of a super-imposed culture alien to millions of our people, might be made to fit in with the Wardha Scheme, to form an integrated system of elementary and secondary education.

The only unsolved problem in India will, perhaps, be to find the type of dedicated teachers who made the People's College idea such a success. Also, one may ask—will the country, with all the gadgets of an affluent living that the second half of the twentieth century is holding forth before man, be satisfied with copying an example that is more than a century old with its accent on simplicity, economy and austerity ?

Perhaps the country wants some one with the spiritual appeal of a Gandhi and the practical statesmanship of a Grundtvig to re-invigorate and give a new dimension to a movement that had started, with such great promise, about 35 years ago, at Segaon and Wardha. With this interlude, let us hark back from Grundtvig to Gandhiji and find out what was happening at Wardha in October, 1937.

IV

The Wardha Conference

The ground had been prepared for the next big step that Gandhiji took for developing his idea of Basic National Education. The governing purpose continued to be in favour of a 7-year education for children up to the age of 14. This should be free and compulsory for 300 millions of Indian people. This could be made out by making it self-supporting. The course would be roughly equal to the then Matriculation *minus* English *plus* training in a basic craft. All this was clearly explained in a series of articles in the Weekly *Harijan*.

It was on October 22, 1937, that Gandhiji called the National Education Conference at the Nava Bharat Vidyalaya at Wardha to consider his scheme. He himself presided over this Conference and explained his scheme in detail. After a good deal of discussion in which, among others, Dr. Zakir Husain, then Principal of Jamia



Millia Islamia in Delhi (now President of India), Dr. Syed Mahmud, then Minister of Education, Bihar, Prof. K. T. Shah, the distinguished economist, Acharya Vinoba Bhave, Acharya P. C. Ray, Kaka-Saheb Kalelkar, Shrimati Asha Devi (of Wardha), and others participated, the Conference appointed a Committee under the chairmanship of Dr. Zakir Husain to consider and report on the scheme in the light of the resolutions accepted at the Conference. Aryanayakam was appointed Convener. Of these, Prof. K. T. Shah attended only the first meeting of the Committee and could not sign the final report which was submitted to Mahatma Gandhi on the 2nd December, 1937. The Committee did not record any evidence but received numerous suggestions from individuals, institutions and organizations which were duly acknowledged in Appendix C to the Report.

Before we consider the recommendations of the Committee, it would be useful to make a brief reference to Gandhiji's mind on the eve of the Wardha Conference :

In his introductory speech at the Conference, Gandhiji, after pointing out the importance of primary education (which is "the only education that is available to a very small fraction of the people in our villages") and the fact that the present system of primary education "is not only wasteful but positively harmful", stated that the remedy lay in educating the people by means of vocational or manual training. He explained that what he was placing before them was not the teaching of some handicrafts with liberal education because such teaching of craft involved no attempt to develop intellect. His idea was to impart the whole art and science of a craft through practical training and "therethrough impart the whole education". He explained :

"Teaching of Takli spinning, for instance, presupposes imparting of knowledge of various varieties of cotton, different soils in different provinces of India, the history of the ruin of the handicraft, its political reasons which will include the history of British rule in India, knowledge of arithmetic and so on. I am specially mentioning the Takli and emphasising its utility because I have realised its power and its romance; also because the handicraft of making cloth is the only one which can be taught throughout the country, and because Takli is very cheap."

He also expressed his keenness on finding the expenses of a teacher through the sale of the product of the manual work of his pupils

because he was convinced that "there is no other way to carry education to crores of our children". Answering to the criticism that he was opposed to literary training, Gandhiji said that far from being so, he simply wanted to show the way in which it should be given. As regards the charge that he was advocating a scheme that was based on the exploitation of child labour he asked whether it was burdening the child to save him (the child) from disaster. In fact, we should make the children self-confident and brave by their paying for their own education with their own labour. Also the child would be made to feel that he did not belong only to his parents but also to the village and to the country and that he must make some return to them. Referring to Prof. K. T. Shah's suggestion about the "conscription" of teachers which Gandhiji commended, he wanted to know whether it was fair to label as slavery the compulsory enlistment of service for a year or longer before they began their career. Finally, by giving the children village-based and self-supporting primary education they would be made "true representatives of our culture, our civilization, of the true genius of our nation".

It would be seen from this inaugural speech that it was almost a *verbatim* copy of Mashruwalla's version of the Segaon Method.

Now, Dr. Zakir Husain was the first to point out that Gandhiji's scheme was not "very new". Many educationists, he said, had been trying to make some manual work the centre of education. This was called the "Project Method" in America and the "Complex Method" in Russia. Then again, he said, though it should be our principle to develop the intellect through handwork, we should not be tied to it. As regards self-supporting education, he pointed to the failure of a similar experiment (which had at first been welcomed very enthusiastically) made by John Dewey in America. Besides, there was, he said, danger in laying too much emphasis on the self-supporting aspect of education for in that case teachers in their anxiety to show results might become slave-drivers and exploit the labour of poor boys. The same line of thinking was adopted by Prof. K. T. Shah when he pointed out that self-supporting education would have the result that instead of the present evil of cramming, the evil of over-work and undue extraction of labour from the students "would silently but surely creep in". Prof. Shah also expressed his misgivings as to what would happen to the market if



35 millions of children began to produce marketable goods after being supplied with free raw material and marketing facilities. Prof. Shah expressed his doubts about too much emphasis on manual work. "But", he said, "we should not forget that we are living in the machine age. The real problem with machines was that of the distribution of the product". "I believe in manual labour", Prof. Shah said, "but I do not wish to eliminate machines altogether because they save human energy".

If Gandhiji's scheme had its critics, it had also its supporters. The failure of Dewey's experiment, for instance, was ascribed to the fact that he could not work it on a large scale. As regards the question of competition, Gandhiji himself assured his critic that there was no cause for such fear. If there would be any competition, it would be first with the mills and then with the Spinners' Associations but these bodies, he was sure, were not afraid of such competition. On the question of machinery, Gandhiji's views (whether we accepted them or not) were well-known. Machines, according to him "will only help in making all the 35 crores of the people of India unemployed". And again, "when we have 30 crores of living machines, why should we depend on the dead ones?" On the question of slavery to which, according to the critics, the children would be condemned if the scheme were put into force, Gandhiji said that nobody became a slave by working, say working 8 hours a day. "Just as we do not become slaves of our parents at house when we carry out their instructions, so the question of slavery should not arise at all in our proposed schools." Acharya Vinoba Bhave echoed the same feeling when he said : "It is absurd to suggest that school-masters will be slave drivers. Far from it ! The schools will automatically evoke an unprecedented interest in the parents, who will keep vigilant watch on them." Kaka-Saheb Kalelkar was equally emphatic. On the question of child-slavery (or exploitation) Kaka-Saheb said, "I have no such fears because I know that unless teachers work themselves, they should not be able to make the students work. Moreover, the detailed records of work will be kept in the schools and the inspectors will keep a vigilant watch." And then the final shaft : "if I had to chose between intellectual and labour slavery, I would chose the latter." Equally terse was his comment on machines. Pointing out that the Machine Age is the age of ex-

ploitation and that if we start machine manufacturing, we could become an exploiting nation, he was emphatic that "until all men and domestic animals are employed in the country we have no right to snatch their living with the help of these machines". The general trend of the discussions was thus overwhelmingly in favour of Gandhiji's scheme. There were, however, quite a few who were cautious enough to accept the scheme on an experimental basis. To this last group belonged Ravishankar Shukla, B. G. Kher and Piyarelal Sharma.

I have already indicated that Gandhiji's attitude towards the machine and, in particular, towards the question of machine *versus* man, was a primary factor behind his scheme and of his philosophy of education. It was, therefore, not surprising that speaker after speaker at the Conference rose to speak on this key topic. The discussions, however, were more or less out of point in the context of the scheme which was admittedly village-based. No one, in fact, had suggested that primary education in the villages should be based on machine. If a vocational bias were to be given, it was simple good sense to make it handicraft-based. Moreover, a handicraft, more than a machine, evokes a creative response and provides a medium for the training of intellect as of the senses, thus producing a better type of man than a mere mechanic. A machine may also be educative, but very often it is too complicated to be used at the primary stage, even if we rid ourselves of the fear of evil with which the machine is associated in the minds of social workers and humanitarians.

The Conference at the end of the first day's session converted itself into a committee to prepare draft resolutions to be placed before the Conference on the following day on the basis of the following propositions framed by Gandhiji for consideration of the Conference :

1. The present system of education does not meet the requirements of the country in any shape or form. English, having been made the medium of instruction in all the higher branches of learning, has created a permanent bar between the highly educated few and the uneducated many. It has prevented knowledge from percolating to the masses. This excessive importance given to English has maimed them mentally for life and made them strangers in their own land. Absence of vocational training has made the educated class almost unfit for productive work and harmed them physically. Money spent on primary education is a waste of expenditure in as much as what little is taught is soon forgotten and has little or no value in terms of the villages or cities. Such advantage as is gained by the existing



system of education is not gained by the chief taxpayer, his children getting the least.

2. The course of primary education should be extended to at least seven years and should include the general knowledge gained up to the matriculation standard less English and plus a substantial vocation.

3. For the all-round development of boys and girls all training should so far as possible be given through a profit-yielding vocation. In other words, vocations should serve a double purpose—to enable the pupil to pay for his tuition through the products of his labour, and at the same time to develop the whole man or woman in him or her through the vocation learnt at school.

Land, buildings and equipment are not intended to be covered by the proceeds of the pupils' labour.

All the processes of cotton, wool and silk, commencing from gathering, cleaning, ginning (in the case of cotton), carding, spinning, dyeing, sizing, warp-making, double twisting, designing, and weaving, embroidery, tailoring, paper-making, cutting, book-binding, cabinet making, toy making, *gur* making are undoubtedly occupations that can easily be learnt and handled without much outlay.

This primary education should equip boys and girls to earn their bread by the State guaranteeing employment in the vocations learnt or by buying their manufactures at prices fixed by the State.

4. Higher education should be left to private enterprise and for meeting national requirements, whether in the various industries, technical arts, *belles-lettres* or fine arts.

Universities will look after the whole of the field of education and will prepare and approve courses of studies in the various departments of education. No private school should be run without the previous sanction of the respective universities. University charters should be given liberally to any body of persons of proved worth and integrity, it being almost understood that the Universities will not cost the State anything except that it will bear the cost of running a Central Education Department.

The Committee considered these propositions and prepared draft resolutions which were placed before the Conference on October 23, 1937, and were duly passed. The resolutions were—

- (1) That in the opinion of this Conference, free and compulsory education be provided for seven years on a nation-wide scale.
- (2) That the medium of instruction be the mother tongue.
- (3) That the Conference endorses the proposal made by Mahatma Gandhi that the process of education throughout this period should centre around some form of manual and productive work and that all other abilities to be developed or training to be given should as far as possible be integrally related to the central handicraft chosen with due regard to the environment of the child.
- (4) That the Conference expects that this system of education will be gradually able to cover the remuneration of the teachers.

It will be seen that there was no resolution corresponding to or incorporating the fourth proposition placed by Gandhiji—the resolution relating to higher education and universities, presumably

because the Conference was principally seized with the problem of a craft-based, free and compulsory primary education that would be self-supporting. Also, neither in the propositions forwarded by Gandhiji nor in the resolutions finally adopted by the Conference was there any reference to the conscription of teachers. Even if there were such a provision, law courts would have promptly declared it *ultra vires* of the new Constitution of India. Whatever be the reason, it was better left out.

These resolutions were passed on to a Committee known as the Basic National Education Committee under the chairmanship of Dr. Zakir Husain to prepare a planned syllabus on the lines suggested in the resolutions. It was asked to report to Gandhiji within a month. The report was actually submitted on December 2, 1937.

v

The Zakir Husain Report : The Wardha Scheme

The Basic National Education Committee, better known as the Zakir Husain Committee, divided its report into five sections dealing respectively with Basic Principles, Objectives, Training of Teachers, Supervision and Examinations, and Administration. It was then followed by an Appendix laying down a seven-year course on Spinning and Weaving as the basic craft, each year being divided into two terms. Of these 7 years, the first 5 years were to be devoted to spinning and the last 2 years to weaving.

Section I—Basic Principles :

This section repeated the principles adopted by the Wardha Conference, the basic idea being that education should be imparted through some craft or productive work which should provide the nucleus of all other instruction provided in the School. This craft, if taught efficiently and thoroughly, should enable the school to pay towards the cost of the teaching staff. Modern educational thought, the Report pointed out, was practically unanimous in commending the idea of educating children through some suitable form of pro-



ductive work. This was justified on psychological, social, economic and educational grounds, as explained below.

"Psychologically it is desirable because it relieves the child from the tyranny of a purely academic and theoretical instruction against which its active nature is always making a healthy protest. It balances the intellectual and practical elements of experience and may be made an instrument of educating the body and the mind in co-ordination. The child acquires not the superficial literacy which implies, often without warrant, a capacity to read the printed page, but the far more important capacity of using hand and intelligence for some constructive purpose. This, if we may be permitted to use the expression, is 'the literacy of the whole personality.'

"Socially considered, the introduction of such practical productive work in education, to be participated in by all the children of the nation, will tend to break down the existing barriers of prejudice between manual and intellectual workers, harmful alike for both. It will also cultivate in the only possible way a true sense of the dignity of labour and of human solidarity—an ethical and moral gain of incalculable significance.

"Economically considered, carried out intelligently and efficiently, the scheme will increase the productive capacity of our workers and will also enable them to utilise their leisure advantageously.

"From the strictly educational point of view, greater concreteness and reality can be given to the knowledge acquired by children by making some significant craft the basis of education. Knowledge will thus become related to life, and its various aspects will be correlated with one another."

To secure these advantages, the craft or productive work chosen should be rich in educative possibilities. It should find natural points of correlation with important human activities and interests, and should extend into the whole content of the school curriculum. Secondly, the new educational venture should clearly realise the ideal of citizenship inherent in it. It should secure the minimum of education for the intelligent exercise of the rights and duties of citizens. The intelligent citizen must be an active member of society, able to repay in the form of some useful service what he owed to it as a member of an organised civilised community. Thus there would be a close relationship of the work done at school to the work of the community which would later enable the children to carry their outlook and attitudes into the wider world outside.

On the much debated question of the self-supporting character of the school, the Committee considered it to be sound. "Even if it were not self-supporting, it would still be educationally sound and should be accepted as an urgent measure of national reconstruction." That clinched the issue. The Committee, however, calculated that the scheme would be largely self-supporting.

The Committee took note of the fears that the economic aspect of the school might be stressed at the sacrifice of the cultural and educational objectives. This point, the Committee took care to warn, should be constantly kept in mind in the training of teachers as well as in the direction of the work of the supervisory staff.

Section II—Objectives :

These objectives were in the nature of "course objectives" and were laid down in respect of each of the following subjects, viz. :

- (1) The Basic Craft, such as spinning and weaving, carpentry, agriculture, fruit and vegetable growing, leather work or any other craft for which local geographical conditions were favourable and which satisfied the conditions mentioned above.
- (2) The mother tongue.
- (3) Mathematics, including the four simple rules, the four compound rules, fraction, decimals, Rule-of-Three, use of the unitary method, interest, elements of mensuration, practical geometry and the rudiments of book-keeping.
- (4) Social Studies including a simple outline of Indian history with the history of Indian national awakening and appreciation of India's struggle for social, political and economic freedom, celebration of national festivals and of the "National Week"; study of world geography in outline, with a fuller knowledge of India and its relations with other lands, together with knowledge of social institutions, public utility services, training in citizenship and co-operative study of newspapers preferably brought out by the school community.
- (5) General Science including Nature Study, botany, zoology, physiology, hygiene, physical culture, chemistry, knowledge of stars, stories of the great scientists and explorers.
- (6) Drawing.
- (7) Music.
- (8) Hindusthani.

Each of these courses was given a set of objectives which should be the aim of the course to fulfil. Thus the objective of training in a Basic Craft was the development of skill so as to enable the pupil to pursue it as an occupation after finishing his full course. The objectives of Social Studies were (1) to develop a broad human interest in the progress of mankind in general and of Indians in particular; (2) to develop in the pupil a proper understanding of his social and geographical environment; (3) to inculcate the love of the motherland, reverence for its past and a belief in its future destiny as to home of a united cooperative society based on love, truth and justice; (4) to develop a sense of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship; (5) to develop the individual and social virtues; and



(6) to develop mutual respect for the world religions. And so on for the other subjects.

Section III—Training of Teachers :

It was important that teachers of the new schools should have an understanding of the educational and social ideology inspiring the scheme combined with enthusiasm for working it. They should also have undergone some training with a reasonably thorough mastery of the processes and technique of certain basic arts. They should also have some training in formulating projects and schemes of correlated studies and thus link up life, learning and activity. They should have a thorough grasp of the intimate relationship between school and society.

There would be two types of courses, a complete course covering 3 years and a short course of one year's training for the first batch of teachers specially selected from existing schools, national institutions and *ashramas*. The minimum qualification for admission to the longer (complete) course is education upto the Matriculation standard or 2 years' teaching experience after passing the Vernacular Final (or equivalent) examination. The course included, briefly, growing, picking, carding of cotton (or wool), spinning of yarn and making of warp ; machineries of the spinning wheel (or other instruments or tools required to learn the basic craft) ; economics of village industries with special reference to the selected craft, elementary carpentry involved in the selected craft ; training in one of the basic crafts specified ; principles of education ; an outline course in physiology, hygiene, sanitation and dietetics with special reference to the actual problems of village life ; a revision and further development of the basic course in social studies ; a course of lessons and directed study, in the mother tongue, to introduce the teachers to the master pieces of Indian art and literature ; knowledge of Hindusthani ; black-board writing and drawing ; physical culture, drill and *deshi* games ; and supervised practice-teaching in demonstration schools. The teachers should also be encouraged to have hobbies and leisure-time social activities.

The shorter course of training for teachers included training in carding and spinning with the takli ; sufficient training in one of the basic crafts specified ; a short course in physiology, hygiene, sani-

tation and dietetics ; the basic idea of the crafts school and its relation to community life ; formulation and working of simple projects as a basis of co-ordinate teaching ; a short course of lessons on the history of the Indian national awakening and the trend of world movements during this century ; and teaching of at least 25 lessons in the practice school under proper supervision.

Section IV—Supervision and Examinations :

The supervisors must be able to play the role of leaders and guides in the educational experiment. They should have completed training as a basic school teacher together with at least 2 years' experience of successful teaching as well as a year of special training in the work of supervision and administration.

The Committee was highly critical of the existing system of examinations, which was "inadequate, unreliable, capricious and arbitrary" and was "neither valid nor complete". According to the Committee—

"The purpose of the examination can be served by an administrative check of the work of the schools in a prescribed area, by sample measurement of the attainment of selected groups of students conducted by the inspectors of the Education Board. The tests so administered should be constructed in close consultation with the specialists responsible for curriculum revision. They should be long enough to cover the whole range of the curriculum and should be in a form which makes marking objective and independent of individual judgment."

The promotion from grade to grade should be decided exclusively by the teaching faculty of the school on the basis of careful records of the pupils' work. To maintain the desired level of efficiency throughout the school system, the Board of Education should conduct "an annual testing of typical sections from each grade of the schools of the various divisions".

Section V—Administration :

The proper age for the enforcement of compulsion was fixed by the Committee at seven plus. The basic education should be free and compulsory for all girls and boys between the ages of seven and fourteen. Girls might, however, be withdrawn after the completion of their twelfth year if their guardians so desire. "Realities of the situation, chiefly financial" prevented the Committee from making



any recommendations with regard to a very important period of the child-life between the ages 3-7 when the children would be left to the care of "uneducated and indifferent parents mostly struggling against unbearable circumstances." This was one of the most noticeable omissions of the Zakir Husain Scheme.

The new schools were expected to work for 288 days in a year, an average of 24 days in a month. The daily working time would be 5 hours and 30 minutes to complete the different sections of the curriculum.

The Committee recommended that every school should have attached to it a plot of land big enough for a school garden and a playground. Every effort should be made to provide light nourishment to all children during school hours. This should be possible with State and public co-operation.

As regards teachers' salaries, the Committee endorsed Gandhiji's suggestion that the salary should, if possible, be Rs. 25 and never less than Rs. 20 but would recommend a "somewhat higher pay" for teachers with higher academic qualifications who may be recruited to teach the higher classes of the school. Local men should receive preference in the matter of appointment as teachers.

On the organizational side, the Committee recommended that the Board of Education in each province should provide on its academic side for an efficient staff of educational experts one of whose functions would be the systematic measurement of school achievements. They would guide the teachers "in the use of the new standards and norms of achievement" and carry on research to fit the school curriculum to the life of the people. They would also guide the training of teachers and supervisors.

Apart from the official Boards the Committee recommended the establishment of a Central Institute of Indian Education which would be a non-official independent body, free from administrative responsibility and consisting of eminent educationists to act as an advisory body on matters of educational policy and practice, collect information, promote research, publish monographs and journals for educational workers and the like.

On the question of self-sufficiency of the schools, the Committee, after careful calculations, found that on the basis of 1 teacher for 30 students and, taking the entire period of 7 years (full course)



together, the total salary bill of the teacher would come to about Rs. 2,100 while the total income to be contributed by the students would amount to Rs. 1,825. It was estimated that the second period of 7 years would bring in more successful results. Taking, for the present, the first 7 years, the gap would amount to Rs. 275 per teacher per class (of 30 pupils in each) for the whole period ; or on the basis of eight teachers per school, the gap would be Rs. 2,200 per School. Actually, the gap should be very much larger in the first 2 or 3 years of the 7-year period, gradually decreasing in the later stages. Presumably the Government would be called upon to meet the deficits, in the lean years.

As regards the capital cost of the scheme, the Committee, on the basis of current prices, took the cost of the accessories to be Rs. 1,000 for spinning and weaving and the working capital Rs. 500, in all, Rs. 1,500. This did not include the cost of buildings or equipment.

It is obvious that these calculations did not profess to give a complete picture of the financial implications of the scheme. The Committee itself realised this in the course of its observations on the self-supporting basis of the scheme. "Even if it is not self-supporting in any sense," the Committee wrote—"it should be accepted as a matter of sound educational policy and as an urgent measure of national reconstruction. It is fortunate, however, that the good education will also incidentally cover the major portion of its running expenses."

VI

Nai Talim

The Haripura Session of the Congress (March, 1938) accepted the scheme of basic education and decided to establish an All-India Education Board to work out an immediate programme of 'basic national education' for acceptance by those "who are in control of State or private education". This was how the Hindusthan Talimi Sangh originated. It set up its headquarters at Sevagram in April, 1938. It decided to work out the scheme on an experimental basis through a number of private institutions as well as through State Departments of Education. The private institutions selected for the purpose were the Jamia Millia Islamia in

Delhi, the Gujarat Vidyapeeth at Ahmedabad, the Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth at Poona and the Andhra Jatiya Kalasala at Masulipatam. A training school for teachers, the Vidya Mandir Training School, was established at Wardha. As regards the State Departments of Education, those of the United Provinces, Bombay, Bihar, the Central Provinces and Kashmir agreed to introduce basic education as an experimental measure.

The progress of the scheme during the next few years was rather chequered. The Congress Governments resigned in 1939 and the fate of the scheme hung in the balance. The Governments that succeeded withdrew their support from the scheme and the non-official efforts, with the exception of a few, remained moribund. Meanwhile the Sargent Report had accepted the principle of "learning through activity" and said that such activity "will take many forms leading gradually up to a basic craft or crafts suited to local conditions". It did not, however, accept the idea that such education should pay for itself through the sale of articles produced by the pupils. "The most which can be expected", the Report said, "is that sales should cover the cost of the additional materials and equipment required for the work".¹ After Gandhiji's release from prison in 1944, public interest once again revived in the scheme. A Conference on National Education met in Sevagram in January, 1945, took stock of the situation, expressed satisfaction at the progress of basic education and commended it for more general acceptance. The Conference, however, reiterated that the cost of education should be defrayed from the wages earned by the normal adult pupils in the village. This was the thesis of the 'Nai Talim', or New Education, which the Conference was asked to accept. "This is possible", the resolution said, "only if educational institutions in the villages become producers of articles of use and at the same time the articles are of true educational value". To this end, it called for the revolutionization of the economic order of the country.

¹ The report of the Pires-Lakhani Committee appointed by the Central Advisory Board of Education in 1951, however, expressed the view that on the basis of the data and the material collected, the stand of the C.A.B. in respect of the self-supporting aspect of the Basic Education Scheme should be modified. The C.A.B. in considering the report merely expressed the view that a system of education cannot be regarded as basic "unless it places adequate emphasis on craft work, both in its educational and productive aspects".

This concept of Nai Talim which was described by Gandhiji as "education in all stages of life from cradle to grave" was accepted by the Conference and passed on to the Hindusthani Talimi Sangh with the recommendation that the Sangh should give consideration to (i) the question of "post-basic education" as a system of complete education in itself, (ii) the question of "pre-basic education which will serve as a foundation for basic education" and (iii) draw up "a scheme of national adult education". It was thus that the complete structure of Basic Education inclusive of that of Nai Talim was presented before the country.

Since these new resolutions were accepted and power was once again assumed by Congress Governments in 1946, the progress of basic education received great impetus. In 1944, the total number of basic schools was 261 and training centres only 8. By 1951, at the commencement of the First Five-Year Plan, the number of basic schools had risen to 33,730 and training institutions to 114. The total number of elementary institutions was, however, 2,23,267 so that compared to this number, that of the basic schools was still barely 15 per cent. Since then, the progress of basic education has been accelerated, the number of basic schools having increased to over 80,000 during the Second Five-Year Plan. Still more satisfactory was the conversion of nearly 70 per cent. of the training institutions to the basic pattern. It was proposed to convert all the training schools to the basic pattern by 1965-66. By that year, the number of basic schools was also expected to rise to 1,53,000.

VII

Assessment

The subject of basic education as a form of elementary education will be taken up for a general discussion in chapter X of this book. The fact remains that the Government of India accepted the scheme of basic education with certain modifications. In 1960-61, there were, in all India, a little over 80,000 basic schools (junior and senior) with a total enrolment of over 97 lakhs of students. The number of teachers employed was 2,64,000. Direct expenditure (annual)



on these schools exceeded Rs. 28 crores. As we shall presently see, the progress achieved so far has been a fraction of what it would have been if the scheme had been fully and expeditiously implemented. More than ten years before, an Assessment Committee on Basic Education under the chairmanship of G. Ramachandran had considered the question and found that a comparison of average basic schools with average non-basic schools would show that the former had improved the character and habits of the children, their resourcefulness, their capacity of doing things and their powers of understanding. Teachers trained in basic education had also shown themselves, according to the Committee as better teachers whether they worked in basic schools or in non-basic schools. "If basic schools do not generally furnish a better picture", the Committee adds, "it is largely due to the fact that educational administration still remains unimaginative and unable to keep pace with the fresh demands of a new situation." The Committee made a number of recommendations for improving the education imparted in these schools which have been generally accepted by the State Governments and the programmes suggested by the Committee are also being implemented within the limited resources available. In spite of these encouraging results, the over-all progress has been slow and its impact on the public mind has not been very favourable. The Education Commission also, while appreciating the significance of the movement, has more or less ignored it in the structural pattern of education suggested by it except in so far as it has incorporated the idea of what it calls "work-experience" as a necessary ingredient of primary and secondary education.

Gandhiji's own idea of the scheme of basic education as it emerged after the confabulations at Wardha is also well worth re-examination. In the preceding sections an attempt was made to put across the essential ideas in Gandhiji's own words, or the words of the Zakir Husain Committee, as the case might be, as far as possible. The description had to be necessarily brief but it is sufficient to convince even the confirmed sceptic that, having regard to the circumstances prevailing at the time, the limited resources at the disposal of the State and with an indifferent alien government in power, Gandhiji gave a big, bold, lead in the field of national education that clearly marks him out as one of the path-breakers in education for the

Indian masses. It was not a mere vision. The scheme was worked out in concrete terms. Gandhiji, as would be apparent from the series of articles that he was writing for the *Harijan* during this period had given detailed thought to all aspects of the question, as it was gradually taking shape in his mind, resolving doubts and meeting criticisms, consulting experts, finally convening the Conference that met at Wardha in October, 1937. The proceedings of the Conference also show that there was a frank and critical discussion, in a friendly and co-operative atmosphere, of which the Zakir Husain Committee, appointed by the Conference to give practical shape to the ideas expressed at the Conference, took full note. The Committee itself, in its report, went into every detail of the scheme, which it accepted with enthusiasm, making only minor modifications here and there, and with great pains laid down the detailed syllabus appropriate to each class of the 7-year period and made a careful inventory of the accessories to be required for teaching the crafts and worked out the costs.

Much water has flown down the Savarmati river during the last 30 years. A new generation has replaced the old. Planning on a gigantic scale with investments amounting to thousands of crores of rupees, has now become the order of the day. A single instance will suffice to show the way we have travelled during the intervening period. In 1927, Government was spending Rs. 6.95 crores on primary education for the whole of India which came to an expenditure of eight annas (50 paise) per month per head of the school-going population. In the Third Plan for 1961-66, the outlay on primary education amounted, to Rs. 209 crores or an average of Rs. 42 crores per year. The total school-going population (age group 6-11) attending primary classes in 1966 is estimated to be 50 millions. The average cost per pupil, therefore, works out at a little over 70 paise per month. According to Gandhiji's scheme each child receiving education would contribute about 72 paise (or eleven and a half annas) towards his cost. This amount he would produce by his own labour and to that extent the school would be independent of State aid. To meet the gap between teachers' salaries and the contribution of the pupils, the Government's contribution would be about 11 paise, or say, 2 annas per pupil per month instead of 8 annas, if not more, which they were already spending at that time on 6-11 year olds and not even



all of them ; but Gandhiji's scheme covered all the children of the age-groups 7-14 and not merely a certain percentage of the 6-11 year olds. It is not necessary to add more to underline the nature of the educational explosion which Gandhiji was aiming at through the Wardha Scheme.

The self-supporting character of the education proposed to be given under the Wardha Scheme was its fundamental basis. This could be possible only if the education were craft-based or industry-based. A good deal of criticism at the Wardha Conference as well as outside the circle of the Conference was aimed at this basic essential of the scheme. Now as Dr. Zakir Husain pointed out at the Conference, craft-based education is no novelty in educational thinking. And yet Gandhiji's approach to this was novel in so far as he wanted the craft to be the medium through which instruction in all the subjects was to be given. Secondly, it was the means by which education could to a large extent be made self-supporting, and therefore, it was the only practical solution, in the context of the times, to the riddle of compulsory and universal primary education without involving any appreciable cost to the State Exchequer. The role of the State, under the scheme, would be limited to making arrangements for the sale of the products made by the students which would naturally have to conform to certain standards because that would be the " test " for a pass at the examination. Thirdly, the scheme was meant not only to make the schools self-supporting, it would also make the *pupils* self-supporting at the end of the 7-year course because they would have learnt a vocation which would yield them a decent income. In addition, they would have had education in general subjects also which, because of the method of training received at the school, they were not likely to forget and so relapse into illiteracy, which had been one of the recurrent evils of a system of merely bookish education given by indifferent, ill-equipped and incompetent teachers. Finally, the whole concept of wage-based education represented the application of Gandhiji's theory of non-violence in the field of education. This would be Gandhiji's substitute for the city-based industrial civilisation that thrives on exploitation of the weak by the strong, creates slums, brings about a deterioration of moral values, produces conflicts, violence, war. Gandhiji's scheme would be wholly in accordance with the Indian genius and would not be a mere copy of its Western



prototypes. And it was put forward as the only practical way of removing illiteracy from India within the course of a decade without any undue strain on the national finances.

And yet, second thoughts are possible on this and some other aspects of the Wardha scheme. Educational opinion generally is against the employment, not to speak of exploitation, of child labour. This was also clearly voiced at the Wardha Conference. No doubt, Gandhiji refused to accept the view that his scheme involved exploitation in any sense and gave his reasons. In fact, the better type of schools in the advanced countries are paying more and more attention to activity programmes. Also, in most of the American Universities, and in Europe, many students earn while they learn. The colleges and the universities themselves provide placement services for the benefit of their students. Gandhiji's scheme had this merit that it was a joint, co-operative system which, since every student would be contributing his labour as part of his education, and not apart from it, would give him a sense of belonging to the school, and was completely free of any suggestion of inferiority for anyone.

Nevertheless, there was a possible scope for exploitation. Since the worth of a school would be judged, more or less, by the standard of efficiency reached by the students in a particular school and the teachers' emoluments as well as reputation in service would depend on the value and standard of the products manufactured by the students, there would be a natural tendency on the part of teachers, at least of the more unscrupulous among them, to play the role of slave-drivers to maximise production and neglect the cultural side of education. As we have seen, that was exactly the warning given by Dr. Zakir Husain himself at the Wardha Conference. Gandhiji in reply had stated that every good thing had its bad side and that he would not like his scheme to be entrusted to "those who have neither the faith nor the confidence". Anyway, the Zakir Husain Committee also regarded it as "an obvious danger that in the working of the scheme the economic aspect may be stressed at the sacrifice of the cultural and educational objectives". The Committee also thought that teachers "may devote most of their attention and energy to extracting the maximum amount of labour from children, whilst neglecting the intellectual, social and moral implications and possibilities of craft training". Accordingly the Committee laid



great stress on the proper training of teachers and control of the supervisory staff. They also made it clear that they "did not contemplate any direct connection between the teachers' salary and the proceeds from the sale of the children's products". Teachers would be paid directly by the Government while the sale proceeds of the school handicrafts would be credited as income direct to the Treasury.

The success of the scheme would thus largely depend upon the availability of the requisite number of trained teachers with the necessary qualifications. This at once raises certain issues which require special consideration. The issues are—(i) what would happen to the existing (non-basic) schools and to their teachers when the new schools are started ? (ii) What would be the number of teachers required to man the new schools ? How would they be made available ? (iii) What would happen to the students who would pass out of the new schools ?

Let us take the first two questions together. Gandhiji in his concluding speech at the Wardha Conference referred to the question as to whether the existing primary and secondary schools should be closed down (when the new schools are set up) and said that he had no hesitation in making an affirmative answer. At the same time he said that fears on this score were groundless because "there is no possibility of starting the new type of schools at once in all the villages which number about 7 lakhs". Now let us have a picture of the situation. In 1959-60 there were 3,20,000 primary schools and 57,863 secondary schools, in all, 3,77,863 or say, 3,78,000 schools. These schools between them had about 13 lakhs of teachers. Now so far as the new type of schools (as per Wardha Scheme) were concerned there would be 210 students (30 students in each of the seven classes) and say, 8 teachers in each school. On the basis of 1959-60 figures there would be about 957 lakhs of students (in the primary and secondary schools) for whom the number of the new-type schools required would be nearly 4,56,000 and the number of teachers would exceed 36 lakhs. In other words, *if all the teachers in the existing schools were taken in the staff of the new schools there would still be a gap of nearly 23 lakhs of teachers.* Where to find them ?

It was partly in this context that the question of conscription of teachers was raised at the Wardha Conference. The idea seems to have

been originally raised by Prof. K. T. Shah. He seems to have suggested (as appears from Gandhiji's article in the *Harijan*, dated 13.7.1937) conscription (*i.e.* compulsory service as teachers) of "educated men and women" to make up for the deficiency of teachers. As a matter of fact, since all the teachers in service in the primary or secondary schools were not likely to find employment in the new schools, the deficiency was likely to be much more than 23 lakhs ; it could be as high as 30 lakhs if not more. We must remember that the pay of a teacher in the new-type-schools would not normally exceed Rs. 25 p.m., with no further prospects. Gandhiji, however, would allow to the conscripted teachers "a salary not exceeding the maintenance on a scale in keeping with the economic level of the country".^s And then he adds : "The very high salaries that the teachers and professors in the higher branches demand must go." (If Gandhiji were alive to-day, what would he have thought of the College teachers' present demand for still higher salaries ?) Well, unfortunately I have not the exact proposal made by Professor Shah before me but I have Gandhiji's version from which it appears that what Professor Shah expected of the conscripted teachers was "the possession of patriotism, spirit of sacrifice, a certain amount of culture and a training in a handicraft". Gandhiji was quite confident that "his (Professor Shah's) idea is substantial, quite feasible and deserves the greatest consideration". There is no doubt that there are still amongst us people who are ready to sacrifice their own material interests for the national cause. But their number would in any case be hypothetical and it is extremely doubtful if even 5 per cent. of the required number of teachers would be available from this class of men and women of public spirit agreeing to serve the new-type schools in a remote village on Rs. 25 per month. It would, perhaps, be easier to conscript all those who pass the Higher Secondary examination to serve as a primary school teacher before they were allowed to proceed to the next higher course, say, for one year. But this would not answer the requirements of the new type of schools. These "freshmen", teachers-in-teens, are more likely to make a mess of the whole thing.

^s This is rather vague. Did it mean that the pay-scale should be related to the cost of living index?



In fact this particular part of the scheme seems to be the weakest link in the chain.

What about the students passing out of these new-type schools ? Here also the ideas appear to be somewhat inchoate. Evidently Gandhiji thought that a large majority of these would like to set up independently in the vocation for which they had been trained. Some might be recruited to serve in the schools as teachers. A few, because of their special gifts, might, perhaps, proceed to higher education. Apart from the fact that we are completely in the dark about the number or proportion of students as might like to go to a College or join a University for pursuit of higher education, there was also the question of age, and last but not least, their ignorance of English. As it is expected that most of the students in the new-type schools would finish their education at the age of 14, they would not be regarded as quite eligible for a University course due to the immaturity of their age. In such cases, a couple of years' term as a conscripted teacher at a school would do no particular harm. On the other hand, lack of knowledge of English would be a serious impediment if the young person wanted to join the degree course, particularly with Honours, not to speak of post-graduate studies. If the medium of instruction at the University level were to be the mother-tongue as in the primary classes—which was also part of Gandhiji's thought—it would raise altogether a different type of problems, on the national as well as on the academic plane. Confining ourselves to the academic aspect, the real impediment would be the absence of standard text-books and other works in the mother-tongue.⁹ Again, what about those who would want to take up engineering or higher technological and professional courses ? As the boys passing out of the new-type schools would have completed what would be equivalent to the present secondary (or upper primary) standard, what and where would be the arrangements for teaching them English so as to enable them to join those courses where a knowledge of English up to a certain standard would be unavoidable ? As a matter of fact, the present international status of India requires that we should rather try to improve upon our heritage of English than let it run to

⁹ See Chapter XXII.

seed, particularly as there is no substitute to take its place as a medium of world culture or international communication. Few of our languages are developed enough to answer to the requirements of science and technology. Nor have our languages developed the necessary sophistication to deal with the rapidly expanding literature of research in the diverse fields of knowledge. Wherefrom would come the young men and women to face these challenges? How and where would they spend the most significant years of their child life and adolescence, or would they along with others, remain condemned to seven years' rigorous confinement with the *takli* and the *charkha*, satisfied with an income of three paise (half an anna) per hour gross? This is, in simpler language, another great lacuna of the Wardha Scheme. In other words, while the existing system, however chaotic or wasteful, permits a variety of choice out of the different types of schools as well as courses, the Gandhian scheme presents a monochrome view of child education.

This is not to be taken as a wholesale disparagement of the Gandhian scheme. It is to be repeated that this scheme is oriented towards a definite objective. It is to bring education, not merely literacy, to the door of the millions. It is not so much meant for the few intellectually gifted boys and girls as the many who are being denied even that education which would make of them useful members of society and which, without too great a cost to society, would enable them to have a decent independent occupation in life with a creative interest in their work. What more could the common man need?

It is this special objective that has inspired the Wardha Scheme and by which it is to be judged. Gandhiji, as we have seen, has given only a vague outline of his thinking about Collegiate education, but it ranks definitely lower in his scale of priorities. So also has he steered clear of what is called the pre-school education of the child about which a lot of pedagogic research has been done since the lays of Pestalozzi or Maria Montessori. To Gandhiji, the home is the best school for the child before the age of 7. Even the Zakir Husain Committee have expressed some doubts. One does not know what would have happened if the Wardha Scheme had been tried out in practice without any deviations from the lines suggested by Gandhiji. But India was caught up too soon in the whirlpool of World War II, as well as in her own "Quit India" movement



within five years of the Wardha Conference. Priorities changed their position with the rapidity of a kaleidoscope. Gandhiji had the satisfaction of seeing his Congress in power with his trusted lieutenants, Nehru, Patel, Azad and others, secure in their authority. He was, we imagine, content. To-day we have Dr. Zakir Husain, Chairman of the Committee that gave us the Wardha Report, occupying the honoured position of the President of India. A National Government now commands the resources of what was once an Empire, the brightest gem in the British Crown, at their disposal. And so they have now undertaken a gigantic scheme of national reconstruction. Education as an integral part of social service planning occupies a significant position in the new scheme of things. But the new unit of national power is the Kilowatt, not the *takli*. A dream has perished. A new dream has taken its place.



CHAPTER VIII

INDIAN PATH-BREAKER IN EDUCATION :

(3) ASUTOSH MOOKERJEE

I

A Path-breaker ?

Asutosh Mookerjee, unlike Tagore or Gandhiji, was an educationist in the accepted sense of the term. Gandhiji was a social, political and spiritual leader while Tagore was a poet, philosopher and humanist. That was how the world knew them. Their educational activities were subsidiary to their main interest though, for reasons already explained, both of them were path-breakers in education—Gandhiji, because of his basic national education scheme, known as the Wardha scheme and the Nai Talim, and Tagore, because of his experiments at Sāntiniketan. We have also discussed the role of Raja Rammohun Roy as a real path-breaker in education in the course of our chapter on “Education and the Nation” in so far as he helped to open the windows of India to the West.¹ Now, Asutosh Mookerjee was an educationist in the sense that he gave a life-time to the cause of education. For nearly forty years he gave all his working hours, apart from his practice at the Bar or his work on the Bench, to education and enlightenment. A mere catalogue of his educational activities will fill more than a page ; to describe them in full will require several volumes. But was he a path-breaker in the sense that Rammohun, Gandhiji or Tagore were ? Did he blaze a trail like Rammohun ? Was he creative, on the same lines as Froebel, Montessori or Pestalozzi were ? Did he discover a new method, a new system, a new principle of education ?

We do remember Asutosh as a scholar, jurist and judge. At the age of 16, he was contributing original papers, one of which was published in a Cambridge journal *Messenger of Mathematics* in 1881. At 21, he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society as well as of the Edinburgh Royal Society, and at 23, a Fellow of the London Physical Society. At the age of 25, he was taking part

¹ Chapter II.



in the deliberations of the Calcutta University Senate as a Member, while at 29 he became a Member of the Royal Irish Academy. He was twice elected as the representative of the Calcutta University in the Bengal Legislative Council, and the third time by defeating two of his most formidable rivals, Surendranath Banerjea and the Maharaja of Darbhanga, at the general elections held in 1903. In the field of education as such, his association with the Calcutta University was so close and so enduring that he became five times its Vice-Chancellor, and the President of its Post-graduate Councils in Arts and Science for 7 years (1917-1924). When Asutosh passed away in 1924, Lord Lytton, then Chancellor of the Calcutta University, declared : "For many years, Sir Asutosh was, in fact, the University, and the University Sir Asutosh." With his duties at, and for, the University, he combined those of a Judge of the Calcutta High Court for 20 years, rising to be the Chief Justice of the Court. His scholarship was not confined to the subjects in which he took his B.A. and M.A. degrees (with a First Class First in both the courses). His astonishing grasp of a vast field of learning was to be seen to be believed. His legal acumen was equally deep and penetrating. He was not merely a lawyer or a judge ; he was a Jurist. As a law student he had earned the Tagore Law Gold Medal for three consecutive years (1884-86), was appointed a Tagore Law Lecturer in 1897 and published his "Law of Perpetuities" two years later. All this shows the versatility of Asutosh ; at the same time, he was a creator, a real path-breaker in education.

And, yet, what was it that he *created* ? He did not find any new institution or discover a new method of education or a new system of thought. Yet, he was a path-finder. What he created was a new set of values in the sphere of higher education, new in the sense that it was quite different from the ideas that had moved the English rulers in introducing higher education in India.

II

Looking Back

The concluding statement of the previous section would bear clarification. Macaulay had thought of creating an English-edu-

cated class in India, trained in Western arts and sciences. The first efforts in this direction were entirely non-official, in which both Indians and Europeans participated. Among the latter were men like Edward Hyde East, David Hare and Alexander Duff. The Hindu College, originally named *Vidyalaya*, was the result of these efforts. It was placed under a Committee of Indians who had to raise funds for running the institution. Starting with 20 pupils in a rented house in Garanhatta, in north Calcutta, it soon had 69 students on its rolls within the course of a few weeks. They received free tuition with the result that the institution soon found itself in financial difficulties. David Hare advised the management to seek Government help. The Government agreed on condition that it should exercise supervisory control over the institution. That was in 1823. During the year 1825-26, we find the Government assisting several institutions with financial aid. The *Vidyalaya* got Rs. 10,000 while the Madrassa got Rs. 30,000, the Sanskrit College Rs. 20,000, the Delhi College Rs. 7,200 and a sum of Rs. 1 lakh was held on account of an endowment of the Agra College. The control now passed to the General Committee of Public Instruction which helped to establish English classes also in the Mohammedan and Sanskrit Colleges in Calcutta (1827), the Sanskrit College at Benares and the Agra College (1832) while a separate institution was founded in Delhi in 1829 for the cultivation of Western learning, all under European superintendence. Apart from these Colleges, a number of Colleges were established through the efforts of Christian Missionaries. As the East India Company, for political reasons, frowned upon such enterprise within their territories as offending against their principle of religious neutrality, these Colleges moved to the Dutch Settlement at Serampore. Later on, other Church Organizations like the Calcutta Diocesan Committee, the Church Missionary Society and the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland were allowed to build Colleges in Calcutta, but the Government kept aloof from these institutions. Non-official efforts were also responsible for the starting of schools. There were also English "Pay-Schools" started by Indians. The most popular of these was the Oriental Seminary, started by Gour Mohan Addy, where Poet Tagore received his early education. Another was the Arpooly Pathsala which was an English free school and which was later named after David Hare.



and is now called Hare School, standing opposite the Presidency College on College Street, Calcutta. It is now a Government School. Distinguished Indians like Gooroodas Banerjee, Dinabandhu Mitra, Acharya P. C. Ray, Devaprasad Sarbadhikary, Romesh Dutt, Digambar Mitra, Syed Bilgrami received their early schooling in this school. The Presidency College, the Hare School and the Hindu School—this composite trinity—now form a living embodiment of the highest type of Indo-British Co-operation from the early years of British Rule in India.

Well, this short reference to history is a pointer to two things : first, that the initiative for the introduction of English education in India on which Macaulay had set his heart was furthered by a group of Indians led by Rammohun Roy but that later the Government had to step in to assume "supervisory control", followed still later by direct control, over higher education in India. The second point is that while the Indian initiative was due to the appreciation of the cultural value of English education as well as its national value, the aim of the English rulers was to ensure, on the one hand, a steady supply of English-knowing clerks and assistants to help the English officials of the East India Company to administer the country and, on the other hand, to create a band of Indians who would act as interpreters between the rulers and the native population. This does not mean, of course, that Macaulay, or for that matter, any other Englishman brought up on English liberal traditions, had their vision limited by the immediate requirements for a body of clerks, writers or legal assistants (for the English judges and magistrates).² Thus an epitaph on David Hare composed by another British friend of India, D. L. Richardson, apostrophised :

*" Ah ! warm philanthropist, faithful friend,
Thy life devoted to one generous end :
To bless the Hindu mind with British lore
And truth's and nature's faded lights restore !"*

² As early as January 14, 1832, Lord William Bentinck, then on tour, had written from his camp at Krishnagar to the Vice-President of the Council that he wanted " to facilitate the general introduction of the English language as the organ of judicial business ".— *Hundred Years of the University of Calcutta*, p. 17.



Macaulay, in fact, as already stated, had visualised a time when educated Indians would demand European institutions and then—

"The sceptre may pass away from us. Victory may be inconsistent to our arms. But there are triumphs which are followed by no reverse. There is an empire exempt from all natural causes of decay. These triumphs are the pacific triumphs of reason over barbarism : that empire is the imperishable empire of our arts and our morals, our literature and our laws."

Thirteen years before this, Mountstuart Elphinstone had been urging what is known as the "filtration theory." "If English could be at all diffused among persons who had the least time for reflection," he said before a Committee of the House of Lords, "the progress of knowledge, by means of it, would be accelerated in a ten-fold ratio since every man who made himself acquainted with a science through English would be able to communicate it in his own language to his countrymen." It would appear from these extracts that it was not so much the desire of the English liberals to impose the English language on India as to bring education into the Western arts and sciences, literature and philosophy, to the doors of India. Of course, the subsequent insistence on English being made the medium of instruction tended to confine English education to the upper and middle classes with little hope of "filtration" to the countless millions — who formed the base.

The controversy between the Anglicists and the Orientalists would fill up many pages of this book. It is not necessary to do so for our present purpose, except to help bear in mind that the "filtration theory" with which Asutosh's name was associated *vis-a-vis* the controversy between him and G. K. Gokhale had been one of the bones of contention between the Anglicists and the Orientalists and among the Anglicists themselves. It would, of course, be quite wrong to assume that the Anglicists were all Englishmen and the Orientalists were all Indians. Rammohun Roy, himself an erudite scholar in oriental lore and knew Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian as well as several European languages was the acknowledged leader of the Anglicist group while men like Shakespeare (not the Poet), H. T. and James Prinsep, Macnaghten and Sutherland belonged to the Orientalist camp. These Orientalists did not, as the historian of the Calcutta University, Dr. N. K. Sinha, reminds, undervalue]



the teaching or the diffusion of English during all these years from 1823 to 1835 but they laid much greater stress on the study of Persian and Sanskrit. They thought it was a choice between a profound knowledge of Sanskrit and Arabic literature on the one side and a superficial knowledge of the rudiments of English on the other. They pleaded with the Anglicists for "some degree of moderation", and pointed out that—

"Gentlemen without any pretensions to oriental erudition are declaring their belief that the cherished literature of some hundred millions of people is an unmixed mass of falsehood and absurdity.....It is really a proclamation of a crusade against every oriental feeling and institution—an open attack upon every stronghold and redoubt. All must be utterly destroyed by a *coup de main* and nothing else will suffice. I would earnestly suggest that no exclusive preference should be shown to the cultivation of the English language."³

The Orientalists pointed out that prior to the Resolution of March 7, 1835, the General Committee had "brought the English tongue in contact with the classic idiom of India". They intended a two-way traffic, of a sort, of Indo-British cultural exchange. On the one hand, they wanted the General Committee to publish in "a printed and indestructible form" the bulk of the classical works of India, while, on the other hand, they intended to translate and publish in the classical languages of India some standard works of European Science. It was due to such encouragement and help that such works as Wilson's *Sanskrit Dictionary* or Bahadur Khan's *Epitome of European Sciences* (in Persian) came to be published.

The reports submitted by William Adam in 1835, universally acclaimed to be one of the ablest reports ever written on education in India, challenged the stand taken by the Anglicists and pointed out the utter futility of trying to spread education in the vast rural areas of India through the medium of a foreign tongue. These views had some effect on the stand of the ultra-Anglicists. The resolution of March 7, 1835, that "all funds appropriated for education would be best employed on English education alone" did not, in fact become effective. The cultivation of Sanskrit and Arabic conti-

³ Macnaghten's Minute on the Resolution of March 7, 1835, dated March 25, 1825.



hued to exist under Government auspices. But Macaulay had laid down his dictum : "It is manifestly absurd to educate the rising generation with a view to a state of things which we mean to alter before they reach manhood." Thus was set the pace for the next few decades, and to an extent, so far as University education is concerned, English still continues to be the medium of instruction and of official transactions.

III

Foundation of a University

All this is by way of setting the stage of history, a sort of backdrop, for the emergence of a new leader in the field of education, Asutosh Mookerjee. The question, what is that which Asutosh created that he may be regarded as a path-breaker in education is, however, still unanswered. A little more of history and we shall be ready to indicate the answer.

It was not until more than two decades had passed after the Government Resolution of March 7, 1835, that the first Universities of India were established, at Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. That was in 1857. The first to be established was the Calcutta University. Its foundation day falls on January 24. Since this University was the scene of the labours of Asutosh for nearly 35 years, it would be appropriate if we first trace its development up to the time when Asutosh joined it. The account will necessarily have to be brief.

In 1844, Lord Hardinge, by a formal resolution declared English education as a qualification for public service. For this purpose, the Council of Education, Local Committees and other authorities representing public education as well as scholastic establishments other than those supported by public funds were directed to submit to the Government returns of meritorious students which were thereupon ordered to be circulated to heads of all Government offices with the direction that these students should be given "invariable preference over others" in the matter of filling up of vacancies. The Council of Education established a test examination which none but the students of the Government institutions could take. In framing the syllabus for this test, however, the Council took



cognisance of courses taught only at the Hindu College and the scripts were corrected by administrative officials "ill-fitted to conduct academic examinations". The result was that only 44 students passed in the course of 7 years. Missionary institutions did not send their boys up for this test. In fact, the whole system was allowed to develop along non-academic lines.

The feeling among educationists was that this kind of test examinations should be abolished. The remedy for this state of affairs, as Marshman, appearing before the Parliamentary Committee in 1853 told Parliament, "is the establishment of Universities, one at each of the Presidencies". This was, it must be pointed out, an echo of certain proposals that had already been made from time to time for the establishment of a University in Calcutta. At first, Lord Dalhousie, then Governor-General of India, thought of converting the Presidency College into a University. The surprising thing is that the Government, having done everything to set the ball of English education rolling, not only took more than a decade even to consider the idea of establishing a University, actually fought shy of it when actual proposals came up from time to time. The Board of Control of the East India Company was, of course, the final authority to say 'yes' or 'no'. In 1846, Hobhouse, President, Board of Control, had refused to consider the proposal for establishing a University in Calcutta. Charles Wood, confronted with a similar proposal from Dalhousie, gave expression to his misgivings. He thought that the products of the University, "these highly educated natives are likely to be a very discontented class unless they are employed and we cannot find employment for them all". In spite of such misgivings, he was persuaded to accept the proposal for establishing Universities in Calcutta, Bombay and Madras, but the initiative, according to him, must come from the people and they must be prepared to support the Universities ; otherwise, he was "against providing our own detractors, opponents and grumblers".

Now, the final form which the University of Calcutta was to take was largely determined by the existence of the Hindu College. This College was at first meant exclusively for Hindus, and when other classes and communities began to demand higher education of the type imparted at the Hindu College, the Government had to consider whether a separate general institution should be established which

would be open to all classes of students. The Hindu College was not only imparting instruction in the Arts and the Sciences but also held classes in Law, Drawing and Engineering which were open to non-Hindus. Another point of difficulty was that the Hindu College, though aided lavishly by the Government, was yet not a Government College. The Muslims did not have a College of their own of the type of the Hindu College. The Madrassa was fast growing into an anachronism and its English Department, from all accounts, was an apology, and was ultimately scrapped. So the Government was forced to consider the establishment of another metropolitan College for the benefit of all classes including Muslims, but that was found to be much too expensive as it would add considerably to the already heavy financial commitments of the Government in regard to the Hindu College. The other alternative was to convert the Hindu College itself into a General College, that is, to throw it open to all classes and communities. The Government took the alternative view, took over the Hindu College and changed its name to Presidency College on the recommendation of the Council of Education. The Hindu College was closed on the 15th April, 1855, and the Presidency College started work on the 15th June next.

The Council of Education had conceived the idea that the Presidency College, with its new status, would be raised to the dignity of a University and had accordingly proposed that the College should have four branches, *viz.* General, Law, Medical and Engineering. Actually, the Medical College never formed part of the Presidency College while the Civil Engineering College was established as a separate college in 1856. The Court of Directors of the East India Company, however, had accepted the proposal of starting a University in Calcutta. It is not necessary to go in detail into the various proposals that had been made from time to time for the establishment of a University in Calcutta. The most detailed one was the plan drawn up by the Council of Education in 1845 in which the constitution was framed on the pattern of that of the London University. It also drew up an outline of the proposed regulations for examinations. Many of the proposals made in the scheme were subsequently adopted when the University was actually founded, but, at that time, as already noted, the then President of the Board of Control, refused to consider it.



Charles Wood's acceptance, however grudging, of the proposal to establish Universities in India, was preceded by strenuous efforts in that behalf on the part of both Englishmen and Indians. Of the former, mention may be made of C. H. Cameron, President of the Board of Education, who, on the eve of the renewal of the Company's Charter, submitted in 1852 a petition to the House of Lords. A petition signed by Raja Radhakanta Deb and others on behalf of the British Indian Association and other "native inhabitants of the Bengal Presidency" was also submitted on April 18, 1853. Alexander Duff also added the weight of his support to the idea and said that "in Calcutta at least, where with comparatively little additional expense to Government, a University might be established, somewhat after the general model of the London University with a sufficient number of Faculties". Marshman wanted four Universities including one at Agra, to correspond to the four important linguistic areas (as Cameron had suggested) of India. Charles Edward Trevelyan also lent his support to the idea.

The scheme for the establishment of Universities in India was embodied in Wood's Education Despatch of July 19, 1854. The following are the principal features of the Despatch which for about half a century was destined to be the pattern of Indian Universities.

- (1) The functions of the Universities would be to hold examinations and confer degrees.
- (2) It would be modelled after the University of London.
- (3) The scheme would follow the one prepared by the Council of Education in 1845-46. It would consist of a Chancellor, a Vice-Chancellor and "Fellows" who would constitute the Senate. Both the Chancellor and the Vice-Chancellor would be "persons of high station who had shown an interest in the course of education". The Senate would consist of, besides the members of the Council of Education (in Calcutta) and the Board of Education (in Bombay) some Indian and European members nominated by the Government, being so selected as to give the different systems of education in the affiliated institutions "a fair voice in the Senate". The Senate would manage the funds of the University and frame regulations for examinations.
- (4) The education to be imparted should be "exclusively secular".
- (5) The Directors also made it clear that it was neither their



aim nor desire "to substitute the English language for the vernacular dialects of the country". The Directors "have always been most sensible of the importance of the use of the languages which alone are understood by the great mass of population. These languages, and not English, have been put by us in the place of Persian in the administration of justice and in the intercourse between the officers of Government and the people". It is indispensable, therefore, they said, "that in any general system of education, the study of them should be assiduously attended to".

It was yet some time before the Universities could be established. Lord Dalhousie had to wait for certain clarifications and further instructions from London. Meanwhile the first Senate had to be nominated for they would make the rules which would enable the University to function. After further correspondence, the Court of Directors of the East India Company authorised the Governor-General-in-Council to commence work without further reference to the Court. A Committee had already been set up by the Government of India to fix up the details. It submitted its report on August 7, 1856. Meanwhile, in anticipation of an Act of Legislature incorporating the University, it was declared that the Governor-General should be the Chancellor of the University of Calcutta, while the Governors of Bombay and Madras were to be the Chancellors respectively of the University of Bombay and the University of Madras. James William Colvile was appointed the first Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University.

The University Act (Act II of 1857) was passed by the Legislature and received the Governor-General's assent on January 24, 1857. The First Fellows of the University were named in the Act. In Calcutta, of the 38 Fellows, 6 were Indian, all nominated or *ex-officio*. In Bombay, out of 29 Senators 5 were Indians while in Madras, out of 40 Senators, only 3 were Indians. In Calcutta, the Chancellor, the Vice-Chancellor and the Fellows were "constituted and declared" in the Act to be one "Body Politic and Corporate by the name of the University of Calcutta". This Senate held its first meeting on January 3, 1857. At this meeting, Col. W. Grappel, Professor of Jurisprudence, Presidency College, was appointed the first Registrar.



Two points deserve special notice in this connection. Though Wood's despatch had recommended the institution of a number of University Professorships, the Universities were not allowed to undertake any teaching work and no steps were taken for the foundation of any Professorship as it was felt that the ample financial aid granted to the Presidency College met this need, with the result that the University remained charged with the power only of granting affiliation, holding examinations and granting degrees and diplomas. The second point to notice was that though Wood's Despatch had recommended that in any general system of education, the study of the Indian languages should be assiduously adhered to, these languages were removed from the list of subjects for the First Arts (F.A.) and B.A. examinations from 1863. According to the previous regulations governing the Entrance Examinations, answers in subjects other than in languages could be written either in English or in any other indigenous language. Under the altered regulations, the answers in each branch were to be given in *English only*, except when otherwise specified. One chronicler of this event opines that this banishment of the Indian vernacular from the University syllabus had far-reaching consequences, and if Bengali, the principal vernacular in Bengal has not yet come into its own as a full-fledged medium of instruction it is partly due to the University banishing it from its higher examinations in the most formative period of its existence.

Another point which may be noticed is that under the Act of Incorporation, none of the three Universities of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras had the power to admit any woman to a University examination. The issue was forced in 1875 when an Indian Christian woman candidate, Chandramukhi Basu, applied for admission to the Entrance Examination of the University. The University rules did not contemplate such an eventuality. All that the University could do for her was "to put her through the same examination papers as were prepared for the candidates". In the words of Vice-Chancellor Arthur Hobhouse, who recorded this event in the Convocation address of 1877, "she has come out of the ordeal triumphantly". Next year, in 1878, the Senate passed a number of regulations providing for the examination of female candidates "in a separate place under the superintendence of ladies". They were



given the option of substituting French, German, Italian or an Indian Vernacular for the second language, and Political Economy for Mathematical subjects in the B.A. course.

A word may be said in this connection about the first year's examination results. At the Entrance examination held in 1857, as many as 244 candidates were registered. Of these, with the exception of 10 candidates, all others belonged to Bengal. Fifteen candidates were absent. Of the rest 172 candidates passed, 115 in Division I and 57 in Division II. Excluding the absentee candidates, the percentage of pass was 75.

At the B.A. Examination held in 1858, 12 candidates appeared and all of them failed to secure pass marks. Only two candidates who had passed in five out of six subjects and were short of pass marks in the remaining subject by not more than 7 marks were allowed to pass in Division II. They were Bankimchandra Chatterjee and Jadunath Bose.

IV

Winds of Change

The year 1857 which saw the birth of the University of Calcutta also saw the mutinous outbreak generally described by historians as the Sepoy Mutiny. This outbreak took place within a few months of the establishment of the University of Calcutta. Naturally it raised certain speculations. Did this "mutiny" affect the Government's view of higher education in the country, in particular the establishment of the Calcutta University? Was this the portent which figured in the rhetoric of Macaulay only about two decades ago about to come true—as a result of the spread of English education?

The historian of the Calcutta University has given us a fair and impartial assessment of the explosive character of the situation as it prevailed during those troublous times.⁴

There were two schools of opinion among the ruling classes on the possible effect of English education on the uprising. One

⁴ *Hundred Years of the University of Calcutta (1857-1956)*.



school got panicky. It expressed its gloomy forebodings about "the success of the plans of 1854", and thought that it should be expedient "to retrace the steps then taken". Ellenborough and George Clerk, men whose opinions, in the words of Vice-Chancellor William Ritchie (Convocation Address, 1860) were entitled to the greatest respect, "sounded the tocsin of alarm as to education and authoritatively announced that the promised good had not been derived from the system of 1854 while they deprecated the increase thereby caused".

As against this there was the view, which gradually established itself after the first impact of panic, that it was not less but more of the type of education contemplated in the Despatch of 1854 that was "the surest inoculation against political or civil discontent and unrest". In fact, Ritchie had himself declared : "Educate your people from Cape Comorin to the Himalayas, and the second mutiny of 1857 will be impossible." Six years later, Sir Henry Maine was saying that by imparting university education they were creating rapidly "a multitudinous class which in the future will be of the most serious importance for good or for evil."

The historian adds : "Little did they know that the very first and second generations of Indians who were the products of this new education and learning would turn out to be the first batch of grave-diggers of the British Empire in India." The national song, *Bande Mātaram*, issued from the pen of Bankimchandra Chatterjee, one of the first two graduates of the Calcutta University. Systematic study of British constitutional history, of the rise of the forces of nationalism in Europe and America, the revolt against colonialism and imperialism, the spread of democratic ideas—all these could have produced but one result so far as educated Indians were concerned. Dadabhai Naoroji's "Un-British Rule in India" was not a stray phenomenon, nor was the birth of the Indian National Congress a premature delivery from the womb of time. They both reflected the logical sequence of Macaulay's prophetic words.

Ten years after the Mutiny, an attempt was made not only to restore the Indian vernaculars but to empower the University of Calcutta to affiliate colleges in which "pure science, true history and true metaphysics", were to be taught only through the oriental languages. At about this time on November 29, 1867, the Secretary to the Government of India addressed a letter to the Secretary of



the British Indian Association, with copy forwarded to the Registrar, Calcutta University, "suggesting more extensive employment of the vernacular languages of India as the medium of conveying to the natives of the country, a higher order of education than had hitherto been imparted to them". It is not known whether these proposals were made to check the spread of English education or at least to slow down its progress, or arose out of a genuine desire to see to the development of the Indian languages as a vehicle for expressing scientific and metaphysical concepts and other forms of modern advanced thought. The fact remains, however, that these suggestions proved unacceptable to the University at that time. Five or six years later, the Senate resolved to "set a paper containing passages in English to be translated into one of the vernaculars of India at the option of the candidates, the passages being taken from a newspaper or other current literature of the day". The resolution was approved by the Governor-General-in-Council. With effect from the examinations held in 1885, 2 papers were allotted to Vernacular along with 2 papers in English at the First Arts Examination. There was a Language paper in B.A. but no Vernacular.

Reference was made in the previous section to the fact that the Act of 1857 had deprived the University of Calcutta of the right of appointing professors for teaching work. In fairness to the University it must be stated that it had never reconciled itself with this deprivation and had, from its very inception, expressed its opposition to the privileged position enjoyed by the Presidency College and other Government Institutions. The most outspoken critic of this kind of discrimination was Alexander Duff. "Here at Home (meaning England), the Government does not expand its educational resources," he was saying in 1853, that is, even before Wood's despatch (1854), "on a few monopolist institutions; it strives to stimulate all parties, far and wide, who desire to further the cause of improved education by offering proportionate aid to all who show themselves willing to help themselves." In August, 1858, and again in 1862, he was urging support for his desire that the University should institute professorships and provide lecturers for the benefit of the students of the affiliated colleges. In 1862, a Syndicate sub-committee consisting of Dr. Duff and the Registrar recommended the creation of Professorships in Physical Science, Geology, Natural Philosophy



and Law. Ultimately the move fell through on the ground that it was too premature to accept any such recommendation. The Senate, however, accepted the recommendation for the appointment of a Professor of Natural and Experimental Philosophy. The matter, for the time being was stalled by the Government by the simple expedient of keeping mum.

The issue was, however, forced by Prasunno Coomar Tagore, who, during the financial year 1868-69, made a princely bequest for the endowment of a Professorship of Law, to be called Tagore Professorship of Law. On the 18th July, 1869, the Senate adopted a scheme for the Professorship framed by the Faculty of Law. At the same meeting Herbert Cowell was appointed as the first Tagore Law Lecturer for 1870. He was re-appointed for the two following years. Northbrook, Chancellor, confirmed this appointment as recognition of a principle—that of the University functioning as a teaching body as well. "The difficulty raised was," he said, "whether the actual words of the Legislature justified the University in having any control over professorships. That, I think, has now been settled." The matter went still further when, in his Convocation Address in 1875, Vice-Chancellor Edward Bailey remarked that "the time had arrived when the University itself might very properly, within its means, assume to some extent, actual teaching of the highest character". The same hope was expressed by Lytton, Chancellor, in 1877.

Now, with all this authoritative recognition of a "principle", of the right of the University to entertain professorships and "to some extent" engage in teaching, all remained quiet at the University front, for about 40 years until a path-breaker arrived.

v

Asutosh Arrives

We have already referred to the scholastic achievements of Asutosh and to the fact that at the age of 25 he was participating in the deliberations of the Senate of the Calcutta University. The University had passed its formative stage when Asutosh emerged on the scene. He got it as a going concern. Distinguished Indians as well



as Europeans, scholars as well as administrators, a body of hand-picked Syndics devoted to the cause of education, headed by a succession of able Vice-Chancellors, some of whom had earned world-wide distinction, had served the University well and striven to make its position felt in the affairs of the country. It had already created high intellectual traditions and had the satisfaction of seeing some of its more brilliant alumni occupying positions of leadership and eminence in different spheres of activity. It is difficult to believe, at this time, that it was a band of English-educated Indians, products of our Universities, who with the aid of certain European friends of India, had founded the National Congress and developed a National Movement. Even those who at a later stage attacked the Colleges and Universities as "factories" for the production of *Ghulams* (slaves) and wanted to set up a National System of Education were luminaries of the Calcutta University. In fact, until the rise of Gandhiji—even in spite of him, to a certain extent—the Indian National Movement had been largely an educated middle class movement. To the creation of this class, the University of Calcutta had made a significant contribution. Asutosh himself was one of the most worthy representatives of this class. Unlike many other path-breakers who had revolted against prevailing institutions and the established order and wanted to proclaim a new system of values, Asutosh loved his University and owed complete allegiance to his *Alma Mater*. And yet he was a path-breaker, not in the sense that he disowned the University of which he was a product and discover a substitute (as the protagonists of a National University had tried to do in the wake of the Swadeshi agitation), but because he wanted to strike a path that would guide the University to a position where its authority to function as the nation's intellectual nerve centre, as a powerful lever for the advancement of learning, would be complete and unchallenged.

Reference has already been made to the fact that some of the Englishmen in India and outside had come to entertain some doubts about the suitability of University education for the Indian people. Not that the University was not properly discharging its function of educating the people in the higher branches of learning; but the critics were sceptical about the end-products, the educated young men of India, from the British Imperialistic point of view. Were they, the rulers, creating an antagonistic class, hostile to their interests? May



be, a feeling like this was responsible for the slow pace of development of the Universities of India. During the period 1857-1900 only five Universities were started. A sudden regard for the study of Indian languages, without actually doing much for their improvement or development, might have been the product of an ambiguous attitude. The fact remains that the British ruling classes were thinking of strengthening their hold on the University which could stand foursquare to the winds of change that, in the shape of the national movement, were beating against it from all quarters. The Act of Incorporation (1857) had done duty for nearly 50 years. It was time to change it, and change it at the turn of the century. There was, of course, sufficient academic justification for change. That the University had stood still for close upon half a century was a matter for marvel. The new move, no doubt, disturbed the stillness ; but it did something more.

Before, however, the significance of the new measure which the Government was planning to introduce in order to plug the loopholes of the Act of Incorporation and to lay down a new policy line is explained, it may be useful to refer to one or two aspects of University education in India that brought into relief the un-Indian character of the proposed educational set-up.

One was the composition of the Senate. The Act of Incorporation had laid down that the Senate should consist of, besides the Chancellor and the Vice-Chancellor, at least 30 "Fellows". These were to be all nominated, only a few of them being Indians. The provisions regarding the Syndicate, the executive body of the University, were less specific. It was in 1890 that the principle of election of a certain proportion of Fellows by the graduates of the University was introduced by an executive order. This was really an act of Lord Lansdowne who announced in his Convocation address in 1890 that he would "allow the M.A.'s to submit the names of one or two gentlemen selected by themselves from among themselves" who would thereupon be nominated as Fellows of the University. The first Fellows under this rule were Jogindra Chandra Ghosh and Mahendranath Ray. Within about 50 years, the total number of Fellows of the Calcutta University had risen to about 200 (300 in Bombay) who were all appointed by the Government for life. A Committee appointed by the Senate in 1890 proposed that the maxi-

mum number of Fellows should be fixed at 200 and the minimum at 50 and that half of them should be selected by the Senate and the graduates. The new Bill, compared to the recommendations of the Senate Committee, was a retrograde measure. It reduced the maximum number of Fellows to 100 of them only 20 were to be elected, 10 by the Faculties and 10 by "registered" graduates. By 1892, the number of graduates qualified to vote at the University elections had risen to 900.

This limited right of election showed at once a concession to the pressure of democratic forces and the reluctance of the Government to hand over its power of effective control. Since the Mutiny, a lurking distrust of the educated Indians who had passed out of the University had made the British ruling class apprehensive of the growing influence of the University graduates. Indeed, some of them had even whispered that there had been Bengalee brains behind the revolt of 1857. In 1880, the English author of "Our Educational Policy in India" was warning that the present system of education "is raising up a number of discontented and disloyal subjects". There were also others who harboured similar anxieties. The slow and halting recognition of the principle of election in the constitution of the Senate underlined a remarkable lack of confidence in the educated classes which the British rulers had themselves helped to produce.

There was another grave deficiency. It was the lack of a clear-cut language policy. Here again professions were not matched by practice. The question of making an Indian language the medium of instruction was repeatedly raised and repeatedly shelved. Even in 1891, when Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar had lived the full span of his life, the first Indian Vice-Chancellor, Gooroodas Banerjee, was entering a powerful caveat against the use of a foreign language as the medium of instruction. He thought it not merely desirable but necessary to "encourage the study of those Indian Vernaculars that have a literature by making them compulsory subjects of our examinations in conjunction with their kindred classical languages". More than that, he wanted to make Indian languages the media of instruction because "the dark depths of ignorance all round will



never be illumined until the light of knowledge reaches the masses through the medium of their own Vernaculars."

Finally, the Act of Incorporation did not want the Universities of India to be teaching Universities. They would grant affiliation to Colleges, hold examinations, publish results and award diplomas, degrees etc. We have seen how a munificent donation by Prosunna Coomar Tagore for the establishment of a Professorship of Law on a monthly remuneration of Rs. 1,000 led to the acceptance of a principle. But it was, at best, a token recognition, for it was many years after the turn of the century that the University of Calcutta came to be the centre of post-graduate teaching and research. Till then, it continued to be more or less an examining body.

It was also about this time that the Government was thinking of withdrawal from the direct support and management of educational institutions, especially those of the highest order. This was widely resisted, though on different grounds. Even the Education Commission of 1882 had to point out : " Hasty or premature withdrawal is certain to leave the impression that Government no longer feels any interest in the spread of liberal education....the existence of any such impression would be one of the greatest discouragements private effort could possibly receive." The main reason given by the Government for its withdrawal was that it was spending a sum of Rs. 7,50,000 annually on the maintenance of Government Colleges and that a sum of one-eighth of this amount would be sufficient to educate the same number of students in aided colleges.

There were also other issues which were being debated at about this time. There was also a good deal of searching of hearts about the ultimate values of University education. The question of the employment of graduates was also coming up. The Government at one time seemed to favour the idea that they should care more for the Honours graduates, that is, for the more brilliant of the University alumni but allow the ordinary pass graduates to fend for themselves as best as they could. There was no doubt that the University had come to stay, that it was beginning to be a power in the country, and also that its work was being widely appreciated. It had become urgent, however, to remove the deficiencies of the 1857 Act and to discover a new leadership.

*The Path-breaker's Role : The Act of 1904*

I have already mentioned that Asutosh Mookerjee had become a Fellow in 1889, at the age of 25. Among the stalwarts who dominated the educational scene in the 'nineties, this young man of 25 was soon to make his mark.

Following the comments made by Gooroodas Banerjee in his Convocation address, in 1891, about the need to accord a proper place to the study and use of Indian languages in the universities, Asutosh brought the matter before the Faculty of Arts of the University in the form of a proposal that Bengali, Hindi and Urdu should be included in the courses for F.A., B.A., and M.A. examinations. The proposal was referred to a Committee but nothing came of it till 1902 when the Indian Universities Commission took up the matter and proposed that Vernacular Composition should be made compulsory in every stage of the B.A. course, that Vernacular languages should be introduced in combination with English as a subject for the M.A., and that funds should be provided for the institution of professorships in the Vernacular languages. Also, prizes should be offered for literary and scientific works in those languages. It was not, however, till 1935 when Syamaprasad Mookerjee, the worthy son of Asutosh, was the Vice-Chancellor, that Vernacular was made the medium of instruction up to the Matriculation stage. In 1937, a doctoral thesis written in Bengali was accepted for the Ph.D. degree. Rabindranath Tagore was the first to address the University Convocation in Bengali. It was also during Syamaprasad's time that Indian Vernacular was accepted as a subject for the highest examination of the University, a subject which was later re-named "Modern Indian Languages".

Another matter which we shall take up presently is the conversion of the University into an affiliating-cum-teaching University. This was for the first time provided in the Act of 1904. This provision led to those herculean efforts on the part of Asutosh to make the University of Calcutta a great centre of advanced teaching and research when, a few years later, he set about organizing the post-graduate departments of teaching, thereby fulfilling the true concept of



a University. It was destined to make Asutosh truly and in every sense a path-breaker in education. It was the genius of Asutosh that enabled him to bend the Act of 1904 to his own great purpose. This Act had been framed with a different object—to tighten Government control, through the devious processes of red tape, to weaken the democratic content of the Senate and reduce the position of the Vice-Chancellor himself to one of servility, as was to be evident in the attempt of Lord Lytton, even as late as 1923, to compel Asutosh to toe the Government line. It is a rare and ennobling experience to re-live in one's imagination those anxious days, when the Bengal Tiger (as Asutosh was affectionately nicknamed by his admiring countrymen) fought and struggled to uphold the great ideals of a true University and ultimately won his point in almost every case of a conflict of values.

Asutosh's struggles began with the Universities Bill (1904) introduced in the Indian Legislative Council. In fact, they had begun much earlier when a Conference was convened by Lord Curzon in September, 1901, at Simla to consider the question of changing the pattern of the Universities as incorporated by the Act of 1857. It was not altogether without significance that no Indian educationist was invited to join that Conference and that its proceedings were kept strictly secret. The prevailing temper of the Government was further reflected in the fact that when the Education Commission was appointed a few months after the Conference, no Indian was at first considered fit to be a member of the Commission. Later on, due to public outcry, Gooroodas Banerjee was appointed as a member of the Commission and Asutosh was taken in as a local member for Calcutta. And it was in consonance with the general spirit of mistrust, and the hush-hush attitude that it breeds, that the evidence tendered by the Indians, numbering 63 in all, who appeared before the Commission, was also held back from the public.

The reasons for this hush-hush policy became apparent when the Report of the Commission was published. One of its main recommendations, already noticed, provided for an almost wholly nominated Senate, the Registered Graduates electing only 10 Fellows out of a total of 100. The Syndicate, a body packed with European members, was sought to be made totally independent of the Senate in several vital matters. It was also, perhaps, at the back

of the mind of the Commission that the proposal to provide for the appointment of University Professors and Readers etc. would inevitably lead to the expansion of the teaching departments requiring substantial government assistance which would possibly provide additional grounds for Government control. The Universities Bill was framed on the lines recommended by the Commission. Naturally, the new proposals evoked a strong chorus of protest in the nationalist press and from non-official sections. It was widely suspected, not without reason, as we have seen, that the Government intended to officialise the Universities. Sir Bepin Krishna Bose, who later became the Vice-Chancellor of the Nagpur University, openly declared that the object of the Bill was "to secure to the Government adequate control over higher education in the country". Lord Curzon tried to dismiss public resentment by holding forth the ideal of "self-governing institutions watched paternally by the Government at the background". But G. K. Gokhale considered it strange that "after fifty years of University education in this country, the Government should have introduced a measure which, instead of associatin the Indian element more and more with the administration of the Universities, will have the effect of dissociating it from the greater part of such share as it already possessed". Possibly the adults of yester-year were having their second childhood under the paternal care of the Government, and with the latter not very much in the background, either.

Asutosh Mookerjee, along with Gopal Krishna Gokhale, both members of the Imperial Legislative Council, was the leader of the attack on the Universities Bill of 1904. He attacked the Bill on two distinct issues. One was the desirability of giving an effective voice to Indians in the higher academic bodies of the University and the other was the question of official interference with the Universities.

Let us take the second issue first. As far back as 1888, Raymond West, a successor of Alexander Grant, Vice-Chancellor of Bombay University, while admitting the necessity of the independence of the Universities from Government interference, pointed out that there were two sides to this concept of autonomy. "Now in these days", he said, "the Universities in Europe and also in India may have a still more arduous task to perform, when democracy is advancing with such giant strides (*giant strides*, in 1888 ?) and when the multitude almost



thinks it has a sort of divine right to go wrong....the Universities must be made and kept independent on that side as well as the side which they present to the Government." Let us see what Asutosh had to say on this question. He said : " I am not one of those who contend that high education must be left entirely to the control of the people. On the other hand, I willingly concede that high education is one of the permanent duties of the State and that it must be nurtured and developed under the fostering care of a beneficent Government. But I deny most emphatically that it is necessary or desirable to have any provision in the law which may possibly convert the Universities into mere departments of the State." In fact, that is exactly what the framers of the Bill proposed to do. They had so altered the composition of the Senate as " virtually to dissociate the Indian element from the government of Universities and to put all directive and administrative power into the hands of European professors within such limits as the Government may allow." Asutosh cried out in exasperation : " Are our teachers throughout the country qualified to be trusted with the principle of election ? If they are not, let us say so, in unmistakable terms ; and I add, without hesitation, that if that be our decision and if our teachers really deserve this want of confidence, the sooner we throw this Bill into the waste-paper basket, the better for everybody concerned." As regards Raymond West's fears, Asutosh gave his own reactions in 1924, a year before his death, in the following prophetic words : " When a democracy imperiously demands control over the University, I answer, without hesitation, ' pause, my friends, your claim would become admissible only when democracy ceases to be democracy and is transformed into an intellectual aristocracy '....."

On the question of giving India a voice in the counsels of the University, it was the considered view of Asutosh that there was no justification for increasing the European element in the University bodies. Earlier, he had got the information that the Government had decided to place some of the Government Colleges entirely under Indian professors and accordingly the Colleges at Hooghly, Krishnagar, Rajshahi, Cuttack and Chittagong were staffed almost entirely by such professors. Even in the Presidency College, which was supposed to be the model college in Bengal, there were only



three European professors as against 19 Indian professors. Even the teaching of English was entrusted entirely to the Indian professors in eight out of nine Government colleges. With complete justification, Asutosh declared : " I trust I shall be forgiven if I say that to employ Indians as the main agency for imparting Western education to Indians and then to complain that these Indians have a dominant influence in the administration of their University, is neither logic nor good sense." As one of the historians of the *Hundred Years of the University of Calcutta* comments : " The contradiction involved in employing Indians for teaching and Europeans for controlling the machinery could hardly be ignored." Yet that was what was exactly happening. Teaching was being increasingly entrusted to Indians. This was partly due to the compulsion of circumstances for there were not enough European professors to man the teaching cadres of even the Government Colleges. On the other hand, the power of framing policy and exercising the same in respect of several important details was left entirely to the Syndicate with a preponderance of European members, or the Senate, four-fifths of the members of which were nominated by the European Chancellor, the Governor-General of India.

The Universities Act came into force on September 1, 1904. Commenting on the Bill as it passed through its final stages, Gopal Krishna Gokhale lamented : " For the present, the hands of the clock have been put back and though this by itself cannot stop the progress of the clock while the spring continues wound and the pendulum swings, there can be no doubt that the work done today in this Council Chamber (the Imperial Legislative Council) will be regarded with sorrow all over the country for a long time to come."

In the context of this despairing forecast, the sequel was interesting. Alexander Pedler, as the new Vice-Chancellor, was given the task of carrying out the policy behind the Act of 1904. The first and immediate task was the framing of the Regulations. Pedler, however, retired in March, 1906, without achieving the object. Meanwhile, the time fixed for framing the Regulations had expired. The Government of India, therefore, appointed a Committee in 1906 and Asutosh, who had by that time succeeded Pedler as Vice-Chancellor, was made the Chairman of the Committee. The Committee promulgated the new Regulations. Needless to add, these Regu-



lations were largely the handiwork of Asutosh Mookerjee. The fact that the Committee had been appointed by the Government had created a suspicion in the public mind that it was another attempt to officialise the University. Not that there was any particular need for it, for both in the Senate and the Syndicate, the official bloc with the nominated members commanded a comfortable majority. It was here that the genius of Asutosh found its most subtle expression. His great personality, his massive intellect, his complete mastery over details, his nationalistic outlook were too much even for the stalwarts of the Senate and the Syndicate to counter. A Senate, with 80 per cent. of its membership belonging to the nominated category, became enthusiastic supporters of Asutosh in his bid to make the University of Calcutta the undisputed leader in the great intellectual and social revolution that was transforming the face of India (*vide* his Convocation Address, 1912). His eight years of Vice-Chancellorship were a historic period in the evolution of the Calcutta University. The man who at the electoral contest of 1903 had defeated two formidable rivals, each a giant in his own way, to wit, Surendranath Banerjea and the Maharaja of Darbhanga, succeeded in making the Syndicate a willing tool in the execution of the revolutionary changes on which he had set his heart. In 1904, we may recall, the Syndicate of the University had 10 members of whom only two were Indians.

VII

A Teaching University

Since Asutosh joined the University of Calcutta as a Fellow, and till the passing of the Universities Act of 1904, Calcutta University remained, as already stated, an affiliating and examining body. Almost immediately after assuming charge as Vice-Chancellor (1906), Asutosh set his mind on the great work of transforming the University into a centre of higher teaching.

The historian of the Calcutta University writing on the reform and reorganization of the University during the period 1904-1924 divides the efforts of Asutosh for turning the Calcutta University into a teaching University into four stages : (1) organisation of

instruction for the M.A. students through University lecturers under the Act of 1904. These were professors in affiliated Colleges. With them were associated "Readers" who were all scholars of eminence and distinction so that contact with them by advanced students might stimulate their original thinking ; (2) the establishment of University Chairs to be held by distinguished savants and specialists ; (3) appointment of regular whole-time University professors, Readers and lecturers. So far as the organization of advanced science teaching was concerned, the munificent endowments created by Taraknath Palit and Rashbehary Ghose led to the establishment of the University College of Science and Technology ; and (4) centralization of post-graduate study and research in the Calcutta University with establishment of post-graduate departments in Arts and Science.

Asutosh was intimately associated with all these stages of development. During the first stage we find the names of the following teachers belonging to affiliated Colleges who were appointed as University lecturers, each of whom was a first-rate scholar and reputed teacher in his own field and some of whom became internationally known : H. M. Percival, Monmohan Ghosh, J. N. Dasgupta, C. Little, Jagadis Chandra Bose (Sir J. C. Bose), C. W. Peake, J. A. Cunningham, S. C. Mahalanabis, Haraprasad Sastri, Pramathanath Tarkabhusan, Bhagabat Kumar Goswami Sastri, Harinath De, G. Thibaut, Brajendranath Seal, C. E. Cullis and others. Of the University Chairs, the first to be established was the Minto Professorship of Economics endowed by the Government of India. This was also the first chair in Economics in India, established in 1909. In 1911, Asutosh, taking advantage of the visit to India of King George V in connection with his coronation, persuaded the Viceroy, Chancellor Hardinge, to establish the King George V Professorship of Mental and Moral Science and the Hardinge Professorship of Mathematics. This was followed by the Chair in Ancient Indian History and Culture founded by the University itself. The benefaction of Taraknath Palit led to the establishment of two chairs of Physics and Chemistry while four University Professorships, in Applied Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry and Botany, were established out of the endowments created by Rashbehary Ghosh. These were followed by other Chairs, e.g. Khaira professorships and those founded by the University itself. Which University would be able to



boast of such a contemporary galaxy of talents which the Calcutta University, through the single-minded and far-sighted efforts of Asutosh, was able to assemble to do honour to these chairs ? among them, we had, Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan, Brajendranath Seal, C. V. Raman, P. C. Roy, Meghnad Saha, D. M. Bose, S. P. Agharker, D. R. Bhandarker, Abanindranath Tagore, to name only a few.

But the greatest achievement of Asutosh was yet to be finalised. This was the centralisation of post-graduate teaching at the University. There was strong, persistent and desperate opposition to this scheme and Asutosh had to break his path through this determined bloc. On the 16th March, 1912, addressing the Convocation of the University, Asutosh said : "I am convinced that what our Universities require is an essentially new start on a path untrodden hitherto, that a new spirit has to be evoked, that new forces and agencies have to be created." And then he referred to the King Emperor's declaration that "No University is now-a-days complete unless it is equipped with Teaching Faculties in all the more important branches of the Sciences and the Arts, and unless it provides ample opportunities for Research" (January 6, 1912), and pointed out that this "epoch-making utterance" expressed the "main needs" of the University clearly and precisely. The University had already initiated teaching arrangements in the post-graduate departments of Arts and Science in a number of subjects, the total number of students exceeding 1,000 (1913). "But this M.A. teaching", Asutosh complained, "except in a few notable instances, has not been essentially different either in spirit or in results from B.A. teaching". Nor, in his view, were the Colleges, as a rule, "in a position or willing to devote much time or labour to M.A. teaching such as it is". There was, in respect of M.A. teaching, provision for specialisation and thoroughness (of study) but its aim was not the "advancement of knowledge". The training that an M.A. had received was in respect of some special branch of knowledge ; it "has not aimed at making him anything more".

Asutosh's scheme, not only for creating post-graduate faculties in the University—there were already in existence arrangements for teaching M.A. students in as many as eleven subjects at that time, mainly with the help of professors belonging to the affiliated colleges, especially the Presidency College—but for centralising post-graduate

teaching in the University itself, can be understood only with reference to the state of things prevailing at the time. There were mainly three agencies which were conducting post-graduate teaching, in Bengal, namely, the University, the Presidency College and the Scottish Churches College. Of these, the Presidency College provided facilities for post-graduate teaching in English, Mathematics, History, and Political Economy and Political Philosophy while the Scottish Churches College taught Mental and Moral Philosophy and Pure Mathematics. Outside of Calcutta, Dacca College was affiliated up to the M.A. standard in English while some members of its staff were participating in post-graduate teaching, as University lecturers, in History, Economics, Physics and Chemistry. The Cotton College of Gauhati was affiliated in English, Victoria College, Cooch Behar, in Philosophy, while Patna College was associated with lectures in History and Economics. This meant that there were, in effect, very limited facilities for post-graduate study in the affiliated colleges. When the Vice-Chancellor and Syndicate sent out a circular to affiliated Colleges in Calcutta to find out if they desired further affiliation up to the M.A. standard, the response was "not enthusiastic". So it came to this that centralisation of post-graduate teaching in Calcutta would mean that the Presidency and the Scottish Churches Colleges would lose their privilege for post-graduate teaching and that "all the available resources in Calcutta in a particular subject where to be co-ordinated and placed at the disposal of each post-graduate student". The scheme also implied that the post-graduate teachers would have a recognised academic status for participation in the academic organization of the University which the Act of 1904 had not provided for. The organization which previously controlled post-graduate study and research was the Governing Body which regulated post-graduate teaching for M.A. and M.Sc. students. This body regulated the distribution of work among the University teachers and received and considered reports from the latter as to the progress of work in their respective subjects. They exercised supervision and gave such directions as might be considered necessary.

Meanwhile there were some disquieting events. One was the Government's veto, "on other than academic grounds", of the appointment of three lecturers recommended by the University. When the University protested and urged the Government to



reconsider their decision—the lecturers concerned were A. Rasul, Abdulla Sahrawardy and K. P. Jayaswal, all reputed scholars—the Government replied by reminding that “the Government of India is bound in duty to prevent by every means in their power the exertion of unsettling influences upon students”. The consequence was that the Syndicate submitted a proposal to the Senate for giving security of tenure to the whole-time teachers of the University. The Governing Body for post-graduate studies formulated requirements and framed a comprehensive scheme which had been duly processed by the Syndicate and the University Board of Accounts. To-day this modest demand should have found no difficulty in the way of its acceptance, particularly as it involved no additional financial commitments. But at that time there were many Senators who gave expression to grave misgivings. Some sensed “a danger of megalomania” in the proposal, others referred to the “anomaly of the University classes”, still others called upon the University to proceed with “deliberation and circumspection”. H. R. James, Principal, Presidency College, wanted to have the motion adjourned for a fortnight in the full knowledge that Asutosh would have retired from the Vice-Chancellorship by that time. Gooroodas Banerjee, however, pointed out that the Universities Act (1904) itself wanted to make the Calcutta University “a teaching University” and not to continue as a mere examining body, while Asutosh in his reply clearly set forth the view that “post-graduate instruction on an extensive scale was pre-eminently desirable and was for the good of the community”. In the course of his Convocation Address in 1913 he took the more practical line in justification of the University undertaking M.A. teaching, namely, that “there were no other agencies to supply what the times required”. The only alternative was to entrust the entire task to the Presidency College which, having regard to its circumstances, could not be accepted. He pointed out that it had been thought at first that the post-graduate teaching as prescribed under the New Regulations could be carried out “by a judicious use of existing agencies, that is, the higher sections of the teaching staff of the more prominent affiliated colleges”, but, then, colleges “which can hardly manage B.A. Honours teaching cannot afford continuously to depute their best teachers for M.A. work in the University classes”. The plan of the University classes

(he said), if it was to succeed at all, demanded the immediate creation of more permanent, more reliable and manageable agencies, that is, a body of teachers who would devote themselves entirely to University work.

Asutosh retired from his fourth continuous term of Vice-Chancellorship in 1914, after having been in office for eight years, the longest on record for any Vice-Chancellor. During all these years he had seen the University expand from a mere examining body to a teaching University. He had helped to develop post-graduate teaching. He had been able to institute University chairs in different subjects⁵ with the help of generous endowments from the Government as well as private sources ; he had established a University College of Science and Technology. He had helped to achieve many other things during this period of eight years ; not least of all, he was able to add a new dignity to the University, a spirit of self-confidence, self-respect and independence and to extend to the fullest limits the possibilities of further development and expansion implicit in the Act of 1904 in spite of its obvious handicaps, the greatest of which was its Senate and Syndicate packed with Government nominees. It was only the genius of Asutosh that could do all this—and yet, the last and greatest of his dreams, a unified centre of post-graduate teaching and research which would make M.A. teaching a real thing and not merely a half-hearted extension of undergraduate teaching, had yet to be realised.

The main opposition to this idea came from those who thought that the scheme of centralisation was aimed "at breaking down the only strong organization they had which was the collegiate system", and that it would take away from every College in Calcutta the right to teaching up to the M.A. standard with the result that the Colleges would thereby be reduced to the status of "dignified secondary schools". There were others who were particularly concerned about the status of the Presidency College. The Senate was reminded that "Bengal was ruled by Presidency College men". These expressions of opinion which touched off a keen controversy were made at the

⁵ Ten chairs in the course of twenty months ; half the professorships recruited from outside Bengal : an evidence of the cosmopolitan character of the University.



meetings of the Senate (March 17, March 31 and April 16, 1917) held to consider the report of the Committee appointed by the Government of India itself (without reference to the Senate) to enquire into post-graduate teaching in Calcutta. The Committee consisted, of, besides Asutosh Mookerjee who was designated Chairman, W. W. Hornell, Director of Public Instruction, Principals G. Howells (Serampore College) and W. C. Wordsworth (Presidency College) and Professors P. C. Ray, Brajendranath Seal and C. J. Hamilton. The Committee supported the principle that duplication of work was to be avoided and specialisation fostered. But it considered that "an intimate association and co-operation between the college staffs and the University staffs was imperative in the interests of all concerned and of the development of higher teaching". Another principle accepted by the Committee was that it was necessary to constitute a suitable organisation within which post-graduate teachers would be enabled by discussion among themselves efficiently to conduct the teaching and examination of graduates. This was the genesis of the Post-Graduate Councils of Arts and Science, an academic body, separate from the Senate, and the Boards of Studies. Each of these Post-Graduate Councils would have its own President to be elected by the members concerned, its own Secretary, and its own Executive Committee. The Councils were to consist mainly of teachers with certain representation from the Senate and the Faculties. The Boards of Studies, similarly, would have their own Chairmen and would consist of teachers doing post-graduate work. Their work would include formulation of proposals for improvement in the methods of teaching, study and research. The fear that professors of affiliated colleges engaged in post-graduate teaching would lose their status was allayed by the provision that every teacher doing independent post-graduate teaching work at the date of the establishment of the new organization would be entitled to be a University teacher, but the two great Colleges of Calcutta would lose their M.A. and M.Sc. affiliation. Teachers participating in post-graduate teaching under the new scheme would fall under four categories, namely, those appointed and paid by the University, those whose services were lent from time to time by the Government or by private institutions, those in Colleges specially qualified to take part in post-graduate instruction and who undertook at the request of



the University to deliver a course of lectures on selected topics, and, finally, those primarily engaged in other than educational work who might be specially invited to lecture on special subjects in which they are authorities and for a remuneration settled by the University.

It needs to be added that there was a very influential opposition to this scheme. The University was described by one as a "sick man", and by another as 'a cannibal' (because it wanted to eat up the Colleges, the Presidency College in particular). W. C. Wordsworth, Principal of the Presidency College, who had signed the report, was described as having "agreed to commit suicide". Others advised a further wait till the Calcutta University Commission (Sadler Commission, recently appointed) submitted its report. C. W. Peake led the opposition demanding further consideration by a Committee. He also wanted that nothing in the proposed Regulations should interfere with the Colleges already affiliated to the M.A. or M.Sc. standard, and that further affiliation (up to M.A. or M.Sc.) should not be withheld from the affiliated Colleges—"the door should be left open for further affiliation." Peake was supported by Haraprasad Sastri, Gooroodas Banerjee, Urquhart, Bhupendranath Basu and S. P. Sarbadhikari. In spite of this powerful opposition, Peake's amendment was lost by 14 voting for and 35 against it. Asutosh had described this and other amendments in the following words : "The amendments were of three kinds ; some were for strangulation ; some, again, were for emasculation, while others were for rectification." All these other amendments were also rejected. These numbered forty-six. The draft Regulations, as originally moved and amended by Asutosh himself, were passed. Asutosh's amendment related to the constitution and functions of the Post-graduate Councils and the framing of rules thereof.

In recording these achievements of the great architect of the Calcutta University, one has only to add, as a sort of postscript, that a great part of the New Regulations including those relating to the Post-graduate Councils have since been abrogated by the Act of 1951. These two Councils have now been replaced by a single body, the Academic Council, with a broader base of representation. But the fundamental principles, including the very salutary one that academic matters must be decided by an academic body, have been retained. The Calcutta University continues to be the exclusive authority for



post-graduate teaching. But there seem to be once again second thoughts on the matter. The Hughli College, now under the University of Burdwan, has been allowed to open post-graduate classes. So also the Darjeeling College under the North Bengal University. Even in the Calcutta University, a separate category of "Constituent Colleges" has been created. All this means that in the near future, post-graduate instruction is once again to be decentralised. But the reasons why Asutosh wanted centralised post-graduate teaching have not yet been explained away.

VIII

"Freedom First, Second, Always"

Words, Words, Words ! There are, however certain words which acquire the sanctity of a national slogan, the power of a *mantram*. Then they cease to be mere words but become charged with the power to move millions. Bankimchandra's "*Bande Mataram!*" Netaji's "*Jai Hind!*" Gandhiji's "*Quit India!*"—all these were far more than pairs of mere words, or a concatenation of sounds. Asutosh too has given us a slogan—a slogan of six words which in a concise form of four words appears at the head of this section. The words constitute the vital principle of University education. To the advanced Universities of the West, their right to order their own lives and manage their own affairs, free from official interference, has become part of the established tradition. To the English-educated Indians what would be more natural than to declare their faith in the autonomy of the University, particularly in the organization of its academic life and activities ? Such enthusiasts are, however, apt to forget that when Asutosh presided over the affairs of the University, India was a subject country where the rulers, whatever their traditions at home, could hardly be expected to sign a blank cheque in favour of University autonomy. We have already noticed how the outbreak of 1857 which coincided with the foundation of the three Universities of Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras, filled a large section of the European community with serious misgivings about the desirability of training Indians into the Western arts and sciences. Exactly fifty years later came the

Swadeshi agitation, the vanguard of which was led by leading English-educated Indians. The discomfiture of Sir Bamfylde Fuller who could not move the Calcutta University into taking action against some schools at Serajgunge for alleged disloyal activities could not have pleased the ruling class. The "settled fact" of partition of Bengal had to be unsettled—this again must have caused not a little resentment among British Diehards against the leadership provided by the University-educated men. Curiously and regrettably, there had also grown a class of Indians who continued to yield their self-respect to the British ruling class to the point almost of subservience. The University, under Asutosh, was growing too strong, too nationally minded, too independent, to be regarded with equanimity by such men. There was still some hope of bringing the University to its senses—Asutosh in particular—by playing the trump card in the hands of Government : Finance.

Now, no University, if it is to be true to its creed, can ever expect to be self-supporting. It must depend upon public benefactions and endowments, and upon State help if the former is insufficient. With the decision to centralise all post-graduate teaching in the University of Calcutta, there arose the necessity of expanding the teaching departments of the University as well as its administrative superstructure. In July, 1922, in reply to a question put by Rai Harendranath Chaudhuri in the Bengal Legislative Council, it was stated that out of the total expenditure of the University amounting to Rs. 21,49,255, the Government grant amounted to Rs. 1,63,189 only or less than 8 per cent. whereas students paid by way of examination and tuition fees Rs. 16.1 lakhs or nearly 80 per cent. The deficit of the University as at June 30, 1922, stood approximately at Rs. 5,40,000. Though the Government said that the large size of the deficit was "due to a variety of causes", there was no doubt that a substantial part of the deficit was due to the maintenance of the post-graduate classes.

Naturally, the University of Calcutta had to seek assistance from the Government. There was then the dyarchical system of Government in the British Indian Provinces under the Government of India Act of 1919. P. C. Mitter was Education Minister in Bengal. Faced with the demand for funds not only for maintaining the post-graduate departments but also for financing further schemes of development,

the Education Minister spoke of "the thoughtless expansion of the University in the past", and used such phrases as "criminal thoughtlessness", "needlessly irritating the (Legislative) Council on matters financial", etc. Asutosh replied by declaring that "the plans for University development, whether judged by work already accomplished or activities yet to be undertaken, have been neither casual nor accidental". The Accountant-General of Bengal, who investigated the situation reported that of the accumulated deficit of Rs. 5,40,000, nearly three lakhs "was due to circumstances over which the University had no control". The Government of Bengal, therefore, provided for additional financial assistance amounting to Rs. 2,50,000, but hedged it in with several unacceptable conditions laid down in their letter dated 23.8.1922. Prabhullachandra Ray pointed out that hitherto the Government had given financial assistance amounting to only 8 per cent. (Rs. 68,135) of the University's total expenditure (of Rs. 8,09,793) on the Departments of Arts and Science, and said : "A perusal of Government's letter leads to the conclusion that the Government desires to utilise the present financial embarrassment of the University to obtain control over its affairs in a manner not contemplated in the Indian Universities Act of 1904". Principal Howell pointed to the fact that the Government of Bengal itself was facing a deficit of Rs. 87 lakhs and "when it comes to us with a very superior air and seeks to chastise us for the few lakhs that we have gone beyond our income, it is only human nature to reply—physician, heal thyself". And then Howell said : "It will be a betrayal of the great trust imposed on us as a University, if we yield, and with no such regret I have come to the conclusion that we have no alternative but to refuse the conditions". One of the conditions imposed by the Government was that no further expansion involving financial responsibility will be undertaken by the University until their financial position shows an improvement. P. C. Ray also thought this and other conditions "so humiliating, so gallingly derogatory to our self-respect, that we had better close down the concern, lock up the gates of the University and go about the country for support". Asutosh, in summing up the debate in the Senate, pointed out how propaganda had preceded the statement by the Government, in India and in England, and declared that there was "a sinister and perfidious campaign against the Uni-



versity". Besides, the conditions laid down by the Government, he said, could not be fulfilled. "Take it from me that as long as there is one drop of blood in me," he thundered, "I will not participate in the humiliation of this University". He would go from door to door throughout Bengal, to beg for money from his countrymen. His post-graduate teachers would starve themselves, rather than give up their right to academic freedom. Then he gave his historic call "I call upon you, as members of the Senate, to stand up for the rights of your University. Forget the Government of Bengal. Forget the Government of India. Do your duty as Senators of this University, as true sons of your *Alma Mater*. FREEDOM FIRST, FREEDOM SECOND, FREEDOM ALWAYS ; nothing else will satisfy me".

These six words : "Freedom first, freedom second, freedom always" have since been written in letters of gold in the heart of every alumnus of this and other Universities of India, in the heart of every votary in the temples of learning.

These words were spoken on December 8, 1922. Want of space does not permit me to reproduce the remarkable speech that Asutosh made on that day. But I cannot resist the temptation of quoting some of the inspiring passages from that speech to show in what felicitous language this great educationist, with the true Brahmin's fire in his heart, blazed a trail of glory in the annals of Indian education, inviting his "fellow graduates" to join in the prayer—

"I vow to thee, my country—
 all earthly things above—
Entire and whole and perfect,
 the service of my love—
The love that asks no question ;
 the love that stands the test,
That lays upon the altar
 the dearest and the best ;
The love that never falters,
 the love that pays no price,
The love that makes undaunted
 the final sacrifice."



He said :

" This University will not be a manufactory of slaves. We want to think truly. We want to teach freedom. We shall inspire the rising generation with thoughts and ideas that are high and ennobling. We shall not be a part of the Secretariat Government. Two and a half lakhs ! And you solemnly propose that you should barter away your independence for it ? If you give me slavery in one hand and money on the other, I despise the offer..... Our post-graduate teachers would starve themselves rather than give up their freedom."

It is on record (*vide* Asutosh's Convocation address, March 24, 1923) that the University teachers voluntarily kept a substantial portion of their salaries in abeyance and College teachers, in many instances, ungrudgingly continued their association with the University's work without any remuneration. There, at the 1923 Convocation, in the presence of Chancellor Lytton and two of the Ministers of the Government including Pravaschandra Mittra, Asutosh said :

" We stand unreservedly by the doctrine that if education is to be our policy as a nation, it must not be our politics ; freedom is its very life blood, the condition of its growth, the secret of its success..... No human institution is so permanent as a University. Dynasties may come and go, political parties may rise and fall, the influences of men may change, but the Universities go on for ever as seats of trust and power, as free fountains of living waters and as undefiled altars of in-violate truth."

The 'final sacrifice' with which Asutosh had exhorted his fellow graduates had yet to come. The term of appointment (fifth term) of Asutosh was about to expire in 1923. On returning home after the Convocation that very day Asutosh found a letter from Chancellor Lytton, bearing the same date, awaiting him. It is clear from the language of that letter that it had been composed before the Convocation. The Government had been thinking, the letter said, of retaining Asutosh's services in the post of Vice-Chancellor and referred to his " powers and attainments " which were " of great value to the University and to the cause of higher education in Bengal." " But if these powers and attainments are used in opposition of the Government in the belief that you are thus serving the interests of the University, your continued occupation of the post would be impossible."* And he proceeded to say : " I invite

* For the full text of the Convocation Address of Sir Asutosh Mukherjee, *vide* "Convocation Addresses" published by the University of Calcutta. For the text of Lytton's letter and Asutosh's reply, see *Hundred Years of the University of Calcutta*, pp. 294-300.

you at this time when the Vice-Chancellor's office must be filled anew to assure me that you will exchange an attitude of opposition for one of whole-hearted assistance, for in our co-operation lies the only chance of securing public funds for the University without impairing its academic freedom. If you will do this, if you will work with us as a colleague and trust to your power of persuasion to get what you consider the defects in our Bill amended, *if you can give an assurance that you will not work against the Government or seek the aid of other agencies to defeat our Bill, then I am prepared to seek the concurrence of my Minister to your re-appointment as Vice-Chancellor* and I am confident that we can produce a Bill which will both secure the approval of the Legislative Council and be of lasting benefit to the University " (italics mine).

In a manner, Asutosh had already given his reply in his Convocation Address of 1923, as if in anticipation of this letter, the only difference being that he was now offered reappointment as Vice-Chancellor as the price of his support to the Government. One would have liked to know what Lytton had been thinking when, in the knowledge that he (Lytton) had written such a humiliating letter to the Vice-Chancellor, Asutosh was calling for the greatest sacrifice that the University could possibly make in vindication of the cause of academic freedom. Lytton himself had prefaced his letter with the observation that he had been well aware that the office of the Vice-Chancellor was not "*coveted by him (Asutosh)*" for any reason except "*a wish to serve the University*" which he loved and to the welfare of which he had devoted his life. That being the case, whoever had advised the Governor-cum-Chancellor Lytton to write that letter to Asutosh must have been an arrant fool, unless the whole purpose of the letter had really been to get rid of Asutosh who had been a *bête noir* to the bureaucracy, under a specious plea.

Asutosh, however, gave a dignified and point by point reply to Lytton's letter. Finally he pointed out that to his predecessor Vice-Chancellors beginning with the first Vice-Chancellor Sir James Colvile, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, "*it would have been a matter of astonishment to be told that as Vice-Chancellors, they were expected to adapt themselves to the views of the Government, simply*



because it was the Government which had the appointment in its gift." And then he gave his reply :

"I send you without hesitation the only answer which an honourable man can send, an answer, which you and your advisers expect and desire : I decline the insulting offer you have made to me."

Asutosh's letter was dated the 26th March, 1923. Almost exactly fourteen months later, on May 25, 1924, Asutosh passed away suddenly at Patna where he had gone on a professional engagement.

Rabindranath wrote from Santiniketan :

*Once the Goddess of Wisdom
left her own signature
upon your name,
And you maintained her majesty
with all your life.
Let that name of yours ever proclaim
her triumph
Uniting your memory with her service
in this Temple of Learning.*

The Calcutta University, the temple of learning, bearing the footprints of generations of young, hopeful devotees, proclaims, and will continue to proclaim, the majesty of the achievements of the greatest of them all, Asutosh Mookerjee.¹

¹ It must be understood, however, that, but for the support of a band of loyal followers and fellow fighters in the cause of academic freedom, it would have been extremely difficult for Asutosh to achieve what he did. But he played the role of a Leader in crisis and a path-breaker.



CHAPTER IX

PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION

1

Educating the Child

A child's education begins from his very birth. It is, at the beginning, an in-group process. His first acquaintance is with his mother and his immediate circle of relations and others with whom he comes into contact after his birth. The social role of imitation comes into full play during the early years of a child's life. So does his emotional contact with his parents and others who form his small world. It is through such primary contacts that the educative process for the child begins—at home. The family and the home are the most powerful media for the child in his infancy. The other medium is his physical Nature, which, as many great educators have pointed out, is itself a great educator. It provides a succession of experiences and stimulates the powers of the child's mind, his imagination, his curiosity, his sense of beauty, of discrimination and so on. He learns to identify objects, enriches his play life and develops his capacities through activity, both of the mind and the body. Picture books, toys, small gadgets, building sets, colouring materials and other aids may also supplement the education that he receives from Nature, and in many homes, particularly in towns and cities, these artificial aids are used for initiating the child into an understanding of the worlds of Nature—its birds and animals, its plants and trees, its flowers and the fruits, its colour schemes and combinations, its sounds and symphonies, its movements and moods. Great educators had realised this aspect of a child's education, that is, the education that he receives directly from Nature, of course under proper guidance. Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Froebel, Montessori—and in our own country, Tagore, and Gandhi, to an extent—blazed new trails in education. The necessity is now realised of the development of the powers of the child from within, and not by imposition from without which



had for a long time been the traditional method, as it is even now in many Indian homes. The educative influence of a child's surroundings, of his physical and social environment, can never be over-estimated.

When reference is made to a child's physical environment, it is not merely Nature that is referred to, though that is the sense in which some of the educators have expressed their ideas and formulated their theories. It is, however, not always possible to abstract or withdraw the child, say from a town or city, to the country where he may be enabled to live with Nature. The physical environment of the child may, in fact, consist of nothing more than a slum or a tenement where a family lives a brutish and joyless existence with an utter absence of even the minimum standards of decency and where the dirty lanes or by-lanes, the dark and dingy alleys, are the child's sole play-ground. To the inadequacies of the social environment are added the squalor of the child's physical life. Thus viewed, the educative process for the child becomes a problem of multiple dimensions. It has provided, and continues to provide, a challenge to educational theory.¹ It poses an educational as much as a civic problem, including such measures of urgency as slum clearance, proper housing, children's parks and play-grounds, garden cities near the metropolis and a well-planned scheme of rural reconstruction with appropriate linkage to city areas as an integrated adjunct to the plans of metropolitan development. It also includes proper planning of school buildings with spaciousness and simplicity as the keynote.

To Nature is added nurture. As already stated, this nurture starts at home, with the family into which the child is born. Perhaps it is not immediately feasible, biologically, socially and politically, to extend the principle of family planning to a point where every married couple shall be given a certificate of fitness as parents competent to give their child a proper social and physical environment and education; or to enforce the Platonic scheme of selective mating, or the eugenic scheme of controlled heredity. But there must be means and methods by which children exposed to unhealthy or undesirable influences

¹Montessori's first experiments were carried out in slums.

may be withdrawn from such influences and placed in institutions where the child would receive home care at the hands of trained foster-mothers—we may even call them "house-mothers"—to receive education according to modern standards. It must, however, be understood that it would be, at best, a substitute home, not a real home. A proper scheme of child education requires that the parents themselves should be educated and trained.⁹ I would insist both on *education* and *training* because even an educated mother has been known to have been over-indulgent, or an educated father over-strict, without any thought as to its long-term effect (in either case) on the mind of the child. The consequences have in many cases been disastrous. Much of the delinquencies of adolescents may be traced to the wrong kind of home life—it does not necessarily mean a *poor* home—to which they had been exposed in their early years. Of course there are other causes of juvenile delinquency. Nor does a good home life necessarily mean a strict home life. Parents must intelligently and sympathetically face the time when the adolescent must, as a condition of his further growth, get out of the leading strings of parental control even though it may hurt the parents. It is here that the greatest trial of parenthood comes, to enable the grown-up child, or shall we say, the young adult—to take the right turn in life at this critical period. It is thus that a proper training in child psychology and in the psychology of its growth during its transformation from boyhood into adolescence—should be considered to be a necessary complement of parental education.

At the present time, and particularly in a country like India, the educational system, it is needless to add, must provide for appropriate schemes of child education. Even in advanced countries, where education has made great strides, the child often suffers from neglect or from want of that home care which is, in a manner, his birth-right because both of his parents may be working people who have to be absent from home for long stretches of time during the day, and possibly come back home jaded and tired. In India, in affluent homes, children are sometimes left to half-educated maids or "ayahs" whose outlook, habits and manners, are not always conducive to the child's healthy growth. At the other end of the

⁹ Froebel, for instance, insisted on the education of mothers.



scale, to the problem of a grim economic struggle which is the general lot of the people, are added the problems of mass illiteracy and ignorance, where, as one of the consequences, there is a large scale exploitation of children and of child labour. The question has arisen as to whether the State or other private agencies should come forward to provide the children with the right type of education. The State in India is now purposefully moving towards the idea of giving every child within the age-group 6-14 free and compulsory education of the basic or elementary type. The facilities for secondary education are, of course, still inadequate as we shall presently see. In either case, the quality of education imparted has also suffered because of the want of properly qualified and trained teachers. But the greatest deficiency lies in the field of pre-school education. It is within the age-group 3-6 that the child requires the utmost care and guidance. He is then completely dependent on his parents or the immediate circle of relations he lives with. Society owes it to itself to see that the child is enabled to develop along the right lines. It is here that the traditional teaching has to give way to one based on an intelligent understanding of the child's needs, of the role of Nature and nurture in the upbringing of the child. This stage of his education, as well as the problem of parental education itself, has not received due attention at the hands of the educational authorities, specially in India.

II

Some Child Educators

The growth of the child is of such arresting significance to the community that a reference to some of the famous child educators of the world and their teachings would require no apology.

(a) JEAN JACQUES ROUSSEAU

While dealing with Tagore I had occasion to refer to Rousseau's ideas of educating the child and to his *Emile*. Other familiar names in this field include those of Pestalozzi, Herbart, Froebel, Montessori



and Dewey. It is not my purpose to explain in detail the very important contributions made by these educators to the theory of child education. I shall confine myself to a brief discussion and comparative estimate of their educational ideas.

If it is possible to combine the educational ideas of these men into one single general idea, it is the idea that the child should be trained through his senses and that the process of education should be adjusted to the need for the proper development of each individual child.

Rousseau is sometimes described as the father of modern pedagogy, though a good deal of his teachings have failed to secure acceptance. He would leave the education of the child to Nature. His fancy child, Emile, is the child of Nature, and his book is regarded as the "gospel" of childhood. His was the first elaborate essay into the need for the study of the child as a child, free to develop of its own power, without any super-imposition of the wisdom of an adult. "Nature wills that children should be children before they are men." Nothing is more absurd than that the adult should wish to substitute his own ways of thinking and feeling in the child's mind. That is why Rousseau was a passionate opponent of what he called *positive* education by which he meant the traditional type of education, and wanted it to be replaced by *negative* education. In other words, there must be no formal lessons, no books, no class teaching, for the child. It should be education through experience, with Nature as the medium "Let childhood ripen into children; childhood is the sleep of reason." Since the first reason of the human being is the reason of sensations, let Emile learn his lessons through his play life with utmost freedom. This is the first stage of the child's education, say, up to age 5. The aim is to develop the senses of the child and to let Nature educate him. The second stage of education covers the period 5-12 years. The child (Emile) is not yet to be introduced to books or formal teaching. Nature will continue to educate him. He will ask questions and he will listen to stories. In that way he will gain knowledge of the world. But his main purpose will still be to develop his body and full control of his muscles, to have healthy amusement and open-air exercises. The third stage will cover the age-group 12-15. He will now learn such subjects as history, geography, astronomy, botany, physics, chemistry, literature to satisfy his developing curiosity appropriate to his age. Here also formal



education through books is ruled out. Education, in other words, will continue to be based on the child's experiences. This stage will start the training of his intellect. He will also learn a trade for economic reasons and will be introduced to the community. In the fourth stage (age-group 15-20), education in social relationships begins. He will continue to be guided by reason. He will learn morality by the results or consequences of his acts. He will now have to train his heart (emotions) and intellect. In this way through the four stages of education the child will develop his body, senses, brain, heart and reason (intellect).

It is needless to add that Rousseau's theory was actuated by a revolt against what may be called conventional or formal education. There are many contradictions, inconsistencies as well as gaps in his theory. But there is no doubt that his educational views did exercise a profound influence on the leading exponents of child education who followed him, including Rabindranath Tagore.

(b) JOHANN HEINRICH PESTALOZZI

Pestalozzi (1746-1827), a Swiss school-master born at Zurich, was one of those who were deeply influenced by the theories of Rousseau. As Rousseau expressed his educational ideas in his *Emile*, Pestalozzi recorded his own thoughts on education in his book *How Gertrude Teaches Her Children*, published in 1801. His method was to begin with observation, then turn to consciousness, then to speech. This was followed by measuring, drawing, writing, numbers and reckoning. Just as Rousseau may be said to be the founder of the Naturalistic school of thought, Pestalozzi was the forerunner of the Psychological Movement in education. To do, to be—these formed the educational keynote of the schools founded by these two thinkers. It would, for instance, be difficult to distinguish the following view of Pestalozzi from that of Rousseau. "I laid special stress on just what usually affected their (the children's) senses. From the very moment that the child's senses open to the impressions of Nature, Nature teaches it. So the sole instruction given to the human being consists merely in the art of giving a helping hand to the natural tendency towards its proper



development." Pestalozzi's sympathies with the poor and the helpless led him to emphasise the need for the betterment of the process of instruction. In this view Pestalozzi was greatly influenced by Rousseau's *Emile*, "the dream book", as he called it. Both were concerned with the child, the child who is the centre of the educational process, and not with the books for study. Unlike Rousseau, however, there was a social side to Pestalozzi's educational theories. He had a reformist aim and would seek the aid of Nature in the fulfilment of his social objectives. In other words, unlike Rousseau, he would not leave education wholly to the blind forces of Nature.

(c) JOHANN FRIEDRICH HERBART

Johann Friedrich Herbart (1776-1841) was a German philosopher and educationist. He was a student under Fichte at Jena and met Pestalozzi in Switzerland where he was tutoring. He lectured in Gottingen in 1805, and four years later, occupied the Chair formerly held by Kant at Königsberg. He belonged to a brilliant galaxy of German philosophical thought and the exposition of his educational ideas was linked to his philosophical position. It is said that his educational theory was the first to be based on psychology, that he received his inspiration from Pestalozzi whose theories he developed with a keen philosophical insight. According to Herbart, the simplest elements of consciousness are ideas which result from the interaction of the mind with the external world of sense-perception. To this stock of ideas are added and synthesised new ideas which constitute the essential process of education. This is achieved through successive stages in a logical order. It stands for a certain method of instruction, of giving lessons to the child. The central doctrine is that of apperception which means a method of incorporating new material in such a way as to connect it in a systematic manner, through association of ideas, with the old and previously acquired knowledge. It is the teacher's duty to present the new facts or ideas and it lies with him to make or modify the child's system of ideas. It is he who creates interest and attention on the part of the child by presenting him (the child) with a new idea or set of ideas which he can retain with the help of ideas and knowledge that he has already acquired.

This method, applied through the successive stages laid down by him, conforms, in his view, to the normal process of development of the child mind. Herbart further stated his view that the subjects of the curriculum are to be taught by the method of correlation which has its psychological basis in the human mind.

(d) FRIEDRICH WILHELM AUGUST FROEBEL

The next two names which I now mention, Froebel and Montessori, have become household words in the world of child education. Friedrich Wilhelm August Froebel (1782-1852) was a German with a neglected childhood. Early in his life he came under the influence of Pestalozzi and was for a time attached to Pestalozzi's famous institution at Yverdon near Neuchatel. His experience there did not completely satisfy him. He had in his earlier years, while living in the Thuringian forest, imbibed a sense of the unity and uniformity of Nature which later developed into the theory that man and Nature, since they proceeded from the same source, were subject to the same laws. This formed the basic idea of his experiments in new education. In 1818, he moved to Keilhau, a Thuringian village, where he established his first school with the help of his friends who formed an educational community. It was in 1837 that he formed his first *kindergarten*, literally "Garden of Children", in Blankenburg, a village near Keilhau, which was regarded as the "Mecca of the new faith".

Froebel, already holding on to his concept of the unity of all Nature looked to the course of Nature for the principles of human education. Pestalozzi had said that the faculties of a child were developed by exercise while Froebel thought that education developed the faculties by arousing voluntary activity. As the child belonged both to family and society, he should spend some time in the society of other children in common employment. As these children were of a pre-school age, Froebel invented the term *Kindergarten* where children should find employment in play. Play is any occupation which delights the children. "We should not consider play" said Froebel, "as a frivolous thing. On the contrary, it is a thing of profound significance. By means of play, the child expands in joy



as the flower expands when it proceeds from the bud, for joy is the soul of all the action of that age." Accordingly, Froebel devised occupations (with some selected educative materials) for play and work which had social and educational values. They were related to the social needs of the children. The "gifts" were also so devised that the children, while handling them, would learn through the process of trial and error. In short, the play-element or the play activity was the essence of the idea of the *Kindergarten* as Froebel conceived. Through it the child not only developed the faculties of his body and his mind but was also introduced to the world of social relations. The "gifts"—such as woollen balls of different colours, or wooden articles of spherical, cubical or cylindrical, shapes, cubes of varying sizes etc.,—were the materials for the 'occupations' such as clay modelling, paper folding, wood-carving, weaving, plaiting and so on. It is hardly necessary to add that the Froebelian system follows Rousseau in its contempt for bookish education. Comenius, two hundred years ago, had said : " Education is child-gardening."

(e) MARIA MONTESSORI

Dr. Maria Montessori (1869-1952) was an Italian doctor of the University of Rome, the first woman in Italy to graduate in medicine. She had developed a horror of the class-room methods in her investigations of the educational system of Europe. She found in every class-room children reduced to immobility "like rows of butterflies transfixated with a pin". In her view, this was not discipline but "annihilation" of children. In her first book, *The Montessori Method*, published in 1912, she described her experiments with little children of pre-school age (3-6) in the *Case die Bambini* or "Children's Houses," in the slum quarters of Rome. These were mostly defective children but the startling results she obtained—some of the children passed the State Examination, meant for normal children, in reading and writing—encouraged her to extend her experiments with normal children. The results were equally startling and her school acquired world fame with visitors pouring in from all parts of the world. The principle of her schooling was freedom of movement, provided, of course, that it did not violate the rules about good manners. Sur-



prisingly, the children soon developed a sense of orderliness, of working together. More startling results were obtained from the use of her "didactic material" which were objects of a very simple and yet exact type but which provoked a profound reaction of interest and attention such as few psychologists of her time could have believed possible. The following experience recorded by one of the assistants to Dr. Montessori speaks for itself :

" Little children of between three and four would repeat an exercise with an air of concentration and indifference to surrounding distractions that we have been accustomed to associate only with men of genius. Such a period of "work" might continue from a quarter of an hour to an hour, and then the child would seek other work, upon which he would concentrate in a similar way. Moreover, the child did not seem tired, as after an enforced effort, but rather re-freshed and tranquillised. Indeed, disorderly children—those of a type likely at any moment to lapse into some form of indiscipline—inevitably acquired inward stability, once they had entered upon this form of spontaneous work. The teacher in the second and subsequent years of the class's formation had very little to do in the direction of maintaining order."³

Though differing in details, the Montessori system follows Comenius, Rousseau, Pestalozzi and Froebel in making "natural education," education through spontaneous activity and freedom of movement, as the keynote of education at the pre-school stage. All of them agree—and the view is shared by all modern educationists (Dewey, for example)—that education is a development from within and should not be imposed from without. The teacher in the 'class' should stand by—not to interfere, not to dictate—but ready to help in case of need. It is something like auto-education, a self-government of education with the teacher playing the role of "a perpetual President in the little Republic". Sense training is the principal method in the Montessori system. Guidance, not teaching (in the usual sense) is the other keynote.⁴ That education is to be individualised is the third great principle. Finally, freedom of the pupil, not licence but self-regulation through creative work undertaken through the joy and delight of it, underlies the entire system.

³ *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 14 Edn., Vol. 15, p. 761.

⁴ For a concise description of the Montessori methods and their educational significance, See K. K. Mookerjee : *Some Great Educators*.

This short description of the contributions of some of the great educators of the world is intended to remind ourselves of the great strides that have been made in child education. This is an aspect of the over-all structure of education which has received little recognition in the hands of the State in our country. The nursery school idea is indeed spreading, but only within the charmed circle of the affluent sections of the community. Even where such schools have been established, in the absence of parents, particularly mothers, trained in the technique of the new education and willing to co-operate in seeing that the child is not exposed to contrary influence at home, the maladjustment between the school and the home may produce an unsettling effect on the mind as well as the behaviour pattern of the child that would make the task of the teacher doubly difficult.

It is evident that until the general cultural level of the community is raised and there is better appreciation of the need for the new type of education during the significant years of a child's pre-school life, State efforts in this direction will necessarily be of a very limited scope. The home, in India, will for a long time continue to be the only nursery school for the large majority of our children,⁶ and their mothers its untrained teachers. But still, with her natural love and affection for the child, the mother, provided she herself has reached a moderate education, even though untrained, is still a better potential teacher (with all her faults) than most of the untrained *gurumahisayas* with the cane in hand out to enforce the discipline of complete immobility. But the mother, if she is to play an effective role, will herself require some education in child training and guidance. Another supplementary step that needs be taken in a country like India where out-of-school life of the average student—particularly those coming of poor, illiterate families—is likely to be anti-educative, is to organise, under suitable supervision, the out-of-door play life of the children by opening a sufficient number of children's parks and play-grounds at convenient places (not very far from home) or by subsidising voluntary efforts in that direction. This is both a civic and educational necessity. Movements such as Chil-

⁶ In 1965-66, the estimated enrolment in pre-primary schools was 2,50,000 (1,30,000 boys and 1,20,000 girls) as against 4,56,15,000 in the lower-primary classes (classes I-IV).



dren's Art Societies, the C.L.T., children's films and the like also deserve every encouragement and assistance.

III

Pre-School Education in India

The Education Commission (1964-66) defines the following to be the objectives of what is called pre-primary education:⁶

- to develop in the child good health, habits and to build up basic skills necessary for personal adjustments, such as dressing, toilet habits, eating, washing, cleaning, etc. ;
- to develop desirable social attitudes and manners ; and to encourage healthy group participation, making the child sensitive to the rights and privileges of others ;
- to develop emotional maturity by guiding the child to express, understand, accept and control his feelings and emotions ;
- to encourage aesthetic appreciation ;
- to stimulate the beginnings of intellectual curiosity concerning the environment and to help him understand the world in which he lives ; and to foster new interest through opportunities to explore, investigate and experiment ;
- to encourage independence and creativity by providing the child with sufficient opportunities for self-experience ;
- to develop the child's ability to express his thoughts and feelings in fluent, correct and clear speech ; and
- to develop in the child a good physique, adequate muscular coordination and basic motor skills.

These objectives are fairly comprehensive and would apply equally well to all growing children even beyond the pre-school age. It is, perhaps, always desirable to aim high. The difficulty is to match performance to the target fixed. The Education Commission itself aims at an enrolment of five per cent. of the population in the age-group 3-5 in the pre-primary schools proper and of fifty per cent. in the age-group 5-6 in pre-school classes, by 1986. This is hardly a satisfactory target but the difficulties of providing for pre-primary education for a large number of children are enormous. The only way to deal with the situation is to educate public opinion into a consciousness of the importance of pre-school education. In other

⁶ Education Commission Report (1964-66), p. 148.



words, unless private effort comes forward to undertake the task, the State's role would necessarily have a limited effect. The State may provide certain ancillary services such as those recommended by the Education Commission and/or may help with financial assistance.

Pre-school education refers to the type of education that a child receives or should receive before he is ready to join a formal school. In its broad sense it includes the education that the child receives at home. Secondly, it may mean the education given in an institution of a very special type which resembles more like a well-organised nursery or play-pen than a formal school. It may be regarded as a preparatory school, a pre-basic school, an infant school or, more commonly, a nursery school. A *crèche*, which is something like a public nursery where children may be kept while their mothers are at work may, within the required age-limits of the children, also belong to this category.

It is true that a good home is the best educative agency for the infant who is too young to join a school. A good home is primarily a tribute to those who establish it and run it, that is to say, the parents and other close relations of the child. It is also the product of a society in which healthy norms have been established. For the child, "society" means the immediate circle or neighbourhood which exercises a direct influence on the social aspects of the child's education. Reduced still further to more proximate terms, it means the company the child keeps, even if it means none else than the child's maid, the baby-sitter, the nurse or the governess. The child's outlook, habits, tastes, standards of conduct, sense of right and wrong—all these are thus profoundly moulded during the most impressionable period of his life. Great care should be taken at this period of time to check on the child's playmates outside the home or the school. The parents themselves are expected to have a social awareness of their duties and responsibilities. They must be on the constant watch over the child from near as well as from a distance. Finally, a good house requires the co-operation of the State. The State's interest lies in the fact that the child is its future citizen. The idea is not that the State should directly intervene in or interfere with the home life of its citizens ; at best it can act on the periphery of the domestic circle. The establishment of children's play centres in close association with the primary schools and



under the supervision of specially trained teachers, maintained at State expense or by means of grants-in-aid, can be very useful. But our main insistence must naturally be on providing for the training of those who are in natural charge of the child at home, namely, the parents. Along with the efforts to provide for institutional care of the child's pre-school education, arrangements should be made for the education of mothers in such subjects as child-care and guidance as well as child-psychology, in addition to general education of a certain minimum standard. This may be fitted into a well-coordinated adult education scheme. To train a single mother will insure the future provision of effective teaching for her own children and to that extent it would lessen the burden of providing for institutional care for children at public expense. There are at present about 2.5 lakhs of pupils in the pre-primary schools. The Education Commission's target to provide for an enrolment of five per cent. of the children in the age-group 3-5, and of fifty per cent. of the children of the age-group 5-6 in pre-primary schools or classes would mean a total enrolment of ten million pupils by 1986. Apart from the long period of time taken to reach this target, and in spite of the substantial number of children of the age-group 3-6 that should be benefitted, there would still be a very large number who would be left out of the scheme. A scheme of mother-training may, perhaps, help us to do something about it. This can be possible through a parallel scheme of parent-teacher-society-State co-operation. Behind them all there should be a scientifically tested theory of child education.

Reference has been made to the importance of private effort for an effective role in the spread of the nursery school idea. There is need for a co-ordinating agency in this respect. Nursery or K.-G. schools are expensive affairs. There is no doubt that profit motive plays a part in the scales of fees charged in many of these schools which help to maintain an atmosphere of exclusiveness ; but it is equally true that if properly trained teachers are to be employed and the schools are to be properly equipped to allow the practice of up-to-date methods of teaching in necessarily small classes, guardians must be willing and able to pay the price. The danger comes from those schools which indulge in blackmarketing in education, by charging high price for inferior stuff. The mushrooming of so-called Nursery

or K. G. schools in the big cities has given rise to some legitimate anxiety in this respect. A system of accreditation followed by a strict system of inspection and audit should be helpful to distinguish the sheep from the goats. The Government should have a responsibility in this matter.

The other alternative is direct State help. The Sargent report calculated that a sum of Rs. 32 crores would be necessary for providing pre-primary education for 10 lakhs of children. In 1959-60, our State was spending a sum of Rs. 51 lakhs for 1,48,372 pre-primary students distributed in 1,351 schools throughout India. It must be mentioned, however, that there is a strong feeling in many countries, including India, against State participation in the running of nursery schools. The publicly provided infant school, as the Hadow Committee on Infant and Nursery Schools (1933) in England pointed out, is "a peculiarly British institution". These were the product of the Education Act of 1870. In India, with our extremely limited financial resources an adequate network of nursery schools, supported by public funds, will remain, more or less, a pious idea. All that we can do, perhaps, is to set up a few model schools where experiments can be made to evolve guidelines for translating the nursery school idea into a proper institutional concept. Even in England, at the nursery stage, the progress of children below 5 has not been very encouraging. We are told that although the percentage of the age-group joining nursery classes in England rose from 22 to 43 between 1870 and 1900, it fell to 23 by 1910, to 15 by 1920 and to 13 by 1930.¹ It is also stated that unless these schools are run at a high level, there is a risk that it may produce effects entirely opposite to those intended. Activities, unless properly organised, may bore the children while inactivity may make them "listless, restless, or troublesome when they get home" and even expose them to infection to which they are peculiarly liable.

In India, pre-primary schools are being tried out on an experimental basis. Though according to the figures for 1960-61, the total coverage was only 1,21,122 pupils, distributed in 1909 schools, the percentage increase during the decade 1950-51 to 1960-61 has been quite impressive. As already noticed, during this period, the

¹ See A. N. Sen : *Educational Re-organisation in India* (1944), p. 5. On the other hand, the French nursery schools, *ecoles maternelles*, proved very popular.



number of schools increased more than six times, enrolment by nearly six times and expenditure more than five times. The total quantum of progress, however, remains at a low level, and about its quality, judging by the meagre amount spent, it cannot be very high. Our main reliance must, therefore, continue to be the home, supplemented by school education where available. The Hadow Report (Consultative Committee of the Board of Education, England), 1933, stated that the fundamental purpose of the nursery school or class "is to reproduce the healthy conditions of a good nursery in a well-managed home". Now, this, in India, is like putting the cart before the horse. It is rather the nursery school which seeks to set the model for the educative functions of the home nursery, but for the majority of homes there is hardly anything resembling a nursery except the mother's lap and, perchance, a couple of cheap toys. The grandma may sometimes preside over a story-telling class but her repertoire, considering her own education, is necessarily limited. The English educational expert is probably right when he states that in England the child from the ordinary family "usually enters school with the foundation of education already well laid" or that before he comes to the Infant Department, "he has been encouraged to teach himself to read". The parents there take care of such education at home and there is plenty of educational materials available which they can make use of for the nursery classes at home. The Indian parents, most of whom are village people, or small-income people, have no such resources. Besides, their own level of knowledge is too poor to be trusted to guide their offspring. This confirms the view that a widespread extension of adult education to women is a *sine qua non* for quickening the tempo of child education at home. In the case of the working mothers, the provision of nurseries, or even *crèches*, may be made obligatory for employers with an appreciable staff of working mothers. It is interesting to note that in England it was for the young children in industrial areas, whose parents were employed during the day that the infant schools came into being during the early decades of the nineteenth century.

As it will yet take some time to make our women literate—the present percentage of literacy among them being only 12.8 according to the Census Report for 1961—mother-craft training centres may be opened as adjunct to rural community centres where mothers

will assemble to listen to, as well as participate in, programmes of talks and discussions which might be given by *desh-sevikās*, or other staff specially trained for the purpose. The co-operation of the State and Central Welfare Boards as well as the Community Development Organisation may be sought for the purpose. These centres may be equipped with radio receivers and special broadcasts arranged by the All-India Radio at stated hours on child-care, guidance and education. Similar arrangements may also be made at urban centres or in the industrial estates that are fast growing up in different parts of the country. Further, it would be convenient and economical if, as already suggested, these training centres could be fitted into the campaign for adult literacy.

The focal point at all these training centres should, of course, be the child with its need for healthy growth. In course of time, as the output of the training institutes for primary teachers increases, the more promising of them may be put on duty to promote the establishment of the nursery schools. In the present state of pre-primary education, attendance at the nursery schools cannot be made compulsory. The Central Advisory Board of Education proposed attendance of 1 in 21. England, with 1 in 7 in attendance, has not made it compulsory. It must, however, be realised that the average Indian home is far behind its English counterpart, and that there is an utter lack of educational or didactic materials (what is more, there is little appreciation of the need for such materials), so that if facilities for pre-school education as well as training of mothers in child-care and education were provided on a very much expanded scale, it would go a long way in filling up a real vacuum in our educational system. Of course, the State will be expected to subsidise such efforts, if not directly undertaking the responsibility.



CHAPTER X

PRIMARY EDUCATION

I

A Historical Retrospect

Whatever might have been the lapses of Indian educators and administrators in the past in the matter of introducing a system of education in consonance with the needs of a scientific and technological age, there are records to show that, even a century ago, the whole country was dotted with small village schools as well as schools of oriental learning which were more or less within easy reach of the children sent to these schools.¹ These village *pāthasālās* or *tols* seldom boasted of a school building as such. As regards furniture or fittings, there were practically none. Children sat on a mat or squatted on the floor. There were no *khatas* or exercise-books in the modern sense of the term. Children used wooden slates as there was no paper. Learning was chiefly by rote. The three R's were about all that the children learnt. Weights and measures, simple rules of calculation and accounting, a working knowledge of weather and agricultural practices, and for girls, a knowledge of rituals and religious practices, learnt at home, these were about all the knowledge that the children were acquired to pick up at the village school or at home, outside of the three R's, and that was about all the knowledge that they themselves required in their daily life and activities. Higher learning was confined to a select few reading at the *tols*. The same remarks apply to the Muslim institutions, the *muktab* and *madrassa*. The former corresponded to the Hindu *pāthasāla*,

¹ William Adam's estimate (1835) of Bengal was that on an average, there were 100 *tols* (Sanskrit seminaries) in each district of Bengal or one elementary school for every 400 persons and the number of teachers and students in these seminaries was, on the low side, 12,600. The teachers imparted gratuitous education. The number of *pāthasālās* must have been much more numerous. Earlier, Thomas Munro in Madras (1822-24) found that the state of education in India was "higher than it was in most European countries at no distant period".

the elementary school, and the latter to the *tol*, the seat of traditional learning in philosophy and theology. The analogy should not, of course, be pushed beyond this point for the Muslim institutions of learning were usually an integral part of the mosque and the curricular offerings at the *tol* and the *madrassa* were also sharply different. To be able to recite the Holy Quran well was one of the objectives set forth before the students at the Muslim *muktabas*, while the *madrassas*, institutions of higher Islamic culture, aimed at producing men for the learned professions.

There appears to have been a long period of relative neglect in the period immediately preceding and following the advent of the English in India. Even as William Adam was writing his classic survey of vernacular education in Bengal, the British Governor-General-in-Council was propagating the view that the "great object of the British Government ought to be the promotion of European literature and science amongst the natives of India and that all the funds appropriated for the purposes of education would be best employed on *English education alone*".² Meanwhile, however, a network of vernacular schools had been set up under a European Superintendent.³ Many of these schools were languishing till, in 1824, they were placed under the General Committee (Government). In 1835 the policy was adopted to extend Government aid and supervision to schools which made provision for the teaching of English. Though the Government of the day disavowed any intention to "preclude" the cultivation of "vernacular languages", the introduction of English in school teaching and the patronage that it began to receive in different forms from the ruling classes gradually relegated "vernacular" teaching to a position of unimportance. So far as helping the elementary schools was concerned, the Government, in spite of Adam's report, pleaded insufficiency of funds. They calculated that "there are more villages in the Presidency than we have rupees annually at our disposal"! In 1848, Charles

² Government Resolution, dated March 7, 1835.

³ These schools were first projected by an English Missionary Robert May. In 1818, there were 36 such schools with 3,000 pupils receiving education on a new model and they were in receipt of grants from the General Committee—vide *Hundred Years of the University of Calcutta*, Calcutta University, p. 23.



Wood, then newly appointed President of the Board of Control, was writing to Dalhousie that mass education was " impracticable " because of its bigness.

Actually, the plea about the insufficiency of funds was not the only reason, not even the most important reason, that explained the Government's inaction. The Government of the day was much too pre-occupied with the spread of English education in the country to bother about the education imparted in the so-called vernacular schools for which the English bureaucracy had nothing but contempt. In fact, it was Macaulay's famous Minute which had set the tone of official attitude towards indigenous systems of learning. Others possibly thought that rather than interfere with the existing schools, separate schools should be set up *de novo* after an English model which would not be restricted to the teaching of the three R's, or of out-dated knowledge. That was possibly the idea that lay behind Robert May's attempt to establish new model schools in Bengal. Still another line of thought subscribed to what was known as the " downward filtration theory " (which incidentally appeared to be a justification of the Government's policy), namely, that education percolated or filtered from the higher to the lower stage.* In fact all these facts presaged a new educational movement in complete disregard of the indigenous system already prevailing, that ultimately resulted in the grafting of an entirely different system of education in this country as the vehicle for propagation of European ideals of culture and enlightenment. One result of this was that even the functional literacy—it is agreed that it was of a very low standard judged by current values—which Hindus and Muslims could pick up in their own native schools, disappeared almost completely, plunging the country into the darkness of almost absolute illiteracy while the East India Company and its dignitaries and officers progressed at a characteristically snail's

* It is true that later on this filtration theory was given the go-by in Charles Wood's Despatch (1854). The Education Commission of 1882 also thought the then existing state of elementary education to be " the principal object of the enquiry " before the Commission. These remained, by and large, in the nature of pontifical pronouncements for a long period of time.

place with their files, statistics and pontifical pronouncements.⁶ Some critics have expressed regret that Macaulay's rhetoric should have drowned Adam's logic, or that the time and money that could have been more advantageously invested in the improvement of an already existing system of education was "lost fruitlessly in creating a new system". Scientists say that energy is never really lost. The subsequent educational history of India bears witness to this fact. The sequel is really interesting. On the one hand India has wholeheartedly recognised the utility of Western education, in Humanities as well as in Science and Technology ; on the other hand, she is equally wholeheartedly engaged in ousting English as the medium of instruction from the elementary to the post-graduate stage !

The next landmark in the history of official policy relating to elementary education in India was the appointment of the Education (Hunter) Commission in 1882. This Commission was asked to enquire into the "present state of elementary education throughout the Empire and to report on the means by which this can everywhere be extended and improved". It needs to be added, however, that as a prelude, as it were, to the appointment of the Commission, there had already been a spurt of activity in the field of elementary education. A number of provinces had levied local fund cesses for elementary education—Bengal being a notable exception where the permanent settlement of land revenue appeared to debar the imposition of a cess on land revenue—and there was, as a result, a considerable expansion in the number of both departmental and extra-departmental schools. Records, however, show that while these new model schools registered a large increase (from 2,810 in 1855 to 82,916 in 1981-82), the number of indigenous schools declined (from 47,886 to 25,223) during the same period. The Commission itself laid down the policy that "the different branches of Public Instruction should, if possible, move forward together and with more equal step than hitherto". This was, one would imagine, the Commission's comment on the official neglect of elementary education. The fact remains that the assertions of the Education Commission

⁶ At the time of Wood's Despatch (1854), the number of departmental elementary schools in Bengal was only 69 with 3,279 pupils. In Madras, the figure (1855-56) was 83 with 2,093 pupils. The situation was somewhat better in the Punjab and the North-Western Provinces.

(1882) notwithstanding, there was, at the time, no attempt on the part of the Government to allocate more funds from public revenues in aid of an expansionist programme. The revenue-yielding capacity of the local fund (land) cesses was strictly limited, and with no additional support forthcoming from the local governments, further progress of elementary education depended on two factors : the capacity of the local bodies to render assistance and the earmarking of a minimum portion of the local fund cess for expenditure on elementary education. The first—the transference of the responsibility, control and administration of elementary education to local bodies including District Boards and Municipalities—was one of the principal recommendations of the Education Commission which, generally speaking, was a move in the right direction since it provided for popular participation in widening the mass base of education. But one result of this recommendation was that it enabled the Government to divest itself of financial responsibility for the support of elementary education. Presumably the same idea was behind the other recommendation for earmarking a certain portion of the local fund cess for elementary education. When, after the report of the Education Commission (1882), and in spite of all its encouraging declarations, the Government still failed to provide increased grants, the sequel was foreseen : the progress of elementary education, even on the departmental model, was, more or less, stalled.

If, therefore, the Commission's views on the importance of expediting the progress of elementary education are regarded as mere pontifical pronouncements, it is not the fault of the critic but the judgment of history. In fact, Kashinath Trimbak Telang, a member of the Hunter Commission, had gone beyond the majority view and openly expressed his misgivings in his Note of Dissent to the effect that the current official view that money spent on giving high education to one student should better be spent on giving elementary education to more than one hundred was a subtle method of sidetracking higher education on the plea of promoting elementary education. The fact remains that elementary education languished between 1882 and the turn of the present century.⁶ During this

⁶ In 1881-82, there were 82,916 schools with 2,061,541 scholars. Ten years later in 1891-92, the figures increased to 97,109 and 2,837,607, while in 1901-02, they were 98,538 and 3,268,726, respectively. In fact, the last year of the century showed a slight decrease compared with the previous year—*Government Resolution on Educational Policy, 1904*.

period, the number of elementary schools increased by 16 per cent. The total enrolment stood a little over 3 million in 1901-02, an average of 33 students per school. The indigenous schools had practically disappeared. In fact, history has recorded that the over-all percentage of literacy in India did not register any appreciable increase during the whole of the nineteenth century ! It is also on record that while the outlay from public funds on primary education increased from Rs. 42,07,863 in 1886-87 to Rs. 63,02,901 in 1901-1902, almost the whole of the increase was accounted for by the extra allotment from local and municipal funds, the Government's share of the increase being Rs. 92,000 only. It was no wonder that the Government itself had to confess in their Resolution of 1904 that "the Government of India cannot avoid the conclusion that primary education has hitherto received insufficient attention and an inadequate share of the public funds".

It was Curzon's Government which declared in the Resolution of 1904, referred to above, that "primary education should be made a leading charge upon provincial revenues ; and that in those provinces where it is in a backward condition, its encouragement should be a primary obligation". This was a significant departure from the policy hitherto followed in that financial responsibility for elementary education was henceforth placed squarely on the Provincial Government. This accelerated the pace of development during the next two decades. In 1921-22, there were 160,007 primary schools with an enrolment of 6.3 million. In 1926-27, the corresponding figures were 197,999 and 9.11 million respectively. That the pace of development was still not quick enough is shown by the fact that in 1921-22, the enrolment in the primary schools was only 2.6 per cent. of the population while the percentage of literacy was about 7 per cent. In 1891, the earliest year when literary figures were made available, the percentage of literacy was barely 1.4 per cent. ; it was 3 per cent. at the turn of the century. These figures provide a strange contrast to the view taken by the Hartog Committee only 5 years later that it would be desirable to replace the policy of continued expansion by a policy of "consolidation and improvement". Had the expansion been too rapid—with those figures before the Committee ? It was still more strange that this became the official policy in India till 1937 in spite of the fact that under the Government of India Act



(1919), the portfolio of Education in each British Indian Province had been transferred to Indian control under the system of Dyarchy. Records show that during this period, the tempo of expansion was considerably slowed down but there was no appreciable improvement in quality. The Hartog Committee did, however, one good thing. It drew attention to the problem of stagnation at the primary stage. For instance, it was found that only 18 per cent. of the students in class I managed to reach class V. Since schools of the type of continuation schools were lacking in India, many of those who had managed to climb up to class V soon relapsed into illiteracy. It must, however, be mentioned that compared to the earlier indigenous or elementary schools, the new schools were a reflection of new ideas in elementary education. The elementary school stage now covered 7 to 8 years as against a two-to three-year course followed by the old indigenous schools. Further, these new schools provided for teaching not only the three R's, but also of history, geography, nature study, physical education and hygiene, object lessons and drawing, a little bit of science, agriculture and handwork. The teaching of English was also introduced. The cohorts at this stage were also heterodox in their composition. They included a fair proportion of boys belonging to the backward classes. Girls had also started taking advantage of the new turn in elementary education. They studied not only in the special girls' schools ; many of them were permitted to enrol themselves in the boys' schools. In spite of these improvements, however, the general picture of elementary education in India continued to be one of relative neglect and apathy.

It was not till 1910 that non-official opinion woke up to a sense of its own responsibility. It was in that year that G. K. Gokhale moved his resolution in the Imperial Legislative Council for introducing compulsory primary education. He followed it up by introducing his Bill on compulsory primary education which was largely modelled on British laws. It was an uphill fight for Gokhale had to contend against powerful impediments. One was the veto of the Government which firmly stood against the very idea of making elementary education compulsory, professedly on administrative and financial grounds. The other major impediment was that the whole country, steeped in ignorance and traditionalism, was not

yet ready (so at least the critics thought) to receive the idea of universal compulsory primary education. Gokhale, be it recalled, had laid down five basic principles of the new educational policy, such as :

- (i) universal, free and compulsory education was the most essential step for mass education ;
- (ii) such education should be spread over seven or eight years ;
- (iii) a definite phased programme for its realisation should be prepared ;
- (iv) the Government should accept full responsibility for the preparation and implementation of such a programme ; and
- (v) a large part of the additional resources required for the purpose should be provided by the Government.

As already mentioned, the Government of India was not yet prepared to accept the principle of compulsion in elementary education. This has since been accepted by our National Government as a virtual imperative. It is also one of the Directive Principles of our Constitution. Under Article 45 of the Constitution, it is required that the State " shall endeavour to provide, within a period of ten years from the commencement of this Constitution, for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years ". Article 46 of the Constitution requires that the State " shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, and, in particular, of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes ". These Articles are, of course, neither mandatory nor justiciable. For several reasons, neither the Government of India nor the State Governments who have direct responsibility for education under the present Constitution have so far found it possible to realise this objective. There has, however, been a rapid extension of educational facilities for children within the age-group 6-11 to start with. If the present pace is not slackened and the necessary finances are available—both are, of course, big " if's "—there is reason to hope that by the end of the fourth Five-Year Plan, the target of compulsory education for the age-group 6-11 would be achieved. Before the present situation is taken up for detailed analysis, it would be interesting to have a brief review of the various efforts made in this direction since Gokhale's Bill came up before the Imperial Legislative Council in 1911.



II

Legislative Measures for Compulsory Education (1911-1947)

N.B. Rangnekar in a paper on "Legislation for Compulsory Education" contributed to the Indian Year Book of Education (1964)¹ has given a comprehensive review of various Legislative efforts in the recent past for introducing compulsory education in India. Some of these efforts, including Gokhale's Bill, were made when India was still under British rule.

Separated as we are from the situation when Gokhale introduced his Bill on Elementary Education by over half a century of educational activity, it is difficult to appreciate the reasons of the then Government of India for opposing the Bill notwithstanding its laconic reference to "administrative and financial grounds of decisive weight". In the first place, Gokhale's Bill did not seek to impose compulsory education in any area. It was an enabling Bill. It permitted a local body the *option* to introduce compulsory education in any selected area, provided certain conditions were fulfilled. It was made clear by Gokhale that no local body was to be compelled to come under the Bill if it wanted to keep out of it. For any move to introduce compulsory education would be subject to the sanction of the local authority concerned. It was also left to the Government to lay down the proportion of school-going children at school which must be satisfied before any local body could take up the question of compulsion. In fact, the initiative in this respect was to be left to the local bodies. Further, the Bill was framed in a cautious manner. It was proposed that the compulsory course should extend for four years covering the age-group 6-10. At first, compulsion, if agreed to, was to be introduced for boys only and could later on be extended to include girls in the light of the experience gained. A further element of caution was to be found in the provision of the Bill that the principle of compulsion was to apply to the children of urban areas in the first instance. In order that the Government might not oppose even such a modest Bill, Gokhale did not propose any direct financial responsibility for the Govern-

¹ *The Indian Year Book of Education, 1964, Elementary Education, National Council of Educational Research and Training, New Delhi.*

ment but provided instead that the local body concerned should bear such expenditure as the Government of India itself might prescribe. It must, however, be added that though Gokhale did not, in so many words, place any financial obligation on the Government in the Bill itself except such as the Government on its own would agree to bear, he was quite emphatic that without substantial financial support from the Government, the local bodies would not be able to show any large extension of elementary education in the country. Gokhale calculated that the cost of his scheme would roughly amount to Rs. 4½ crores a year, and that of this amount, the Government should find Rs. 3 crores while the local bodies would find Rs. 1½ crores. "The whole thing", Gokhale declared, "hinges on whether the Government of India are prepared to find a good part of the cost. That is, in fact, the real crux of the question". It must also be added that the Bill was proposed by Gokhale as a sort of interim measure. His long-term programme envisaged universal free and compulsory education, spread over seven or eight years according to a phased programme, as the most essential step for mass education. He was also of the opinion that the Government should accept full responsibility for the preparation and execution of such a programme and that it must be prepared to find the additional resources for the same. Even at this distance of time, no apology is needed to reproduce the following words of the great Indian statesman :

"Of all the great national tasks which lie before the country, and in which the Government and the people can cooperate to the advantage of both, none is greater than this task of promoting the universal diffusion of education in the land, bringing by its means a ray of light, a touch of refinement, a glow of hope into the lives that sadly need them all. The work, I have already said, is bound to be slow, but that only means that it must be taken in hand at once. If a beginning is made without further delay, if both government and the people persevere with the task in the right spirit, the whole problem may be solved before another generation rises to take our place. If this happens, the next generation will enter upon its own special work with a strength which will be its own security of success. As for us, it will be enough to have laboured, for such an end—laboured when the end is not in sight. For, my lord, I think there is not only profound humility but also profound wisdom in the faith which says :

I do not ask to see the distant scene
One step enough for me."²

²D. M. Desai : *Compulsory Primary Education in India*, pp. 81-82, quoted by N. B. Rangnekar, *op. cit.*



In extenuation of the official position it may be stated that the proposal for introducing compulsory elementary education did not receive the unanimous support of even the non-official members of the House. Among the grounds on which Gokhale's Resolution of 1910 was opposed, were the following, namely, (1) that there was no demand for compulsory education from the poorer sections of the people who, in fact, would be hard hit by it ; (2) that there was enough scope for voluntary effort before compulsion was introduced ; (3) that if compulsory education had to be introduced at the elementary stage, it must come as an integral part of the advance of education at all levels ; and (4) that resources required for such an experiment were not available. These points were, however, effectively met by supporters of the resolution which included men like Dadabhai Naoroji and Madan Mohan Malaviya. Ultimately, the resolution had to be withdrawn on an assurance that the proposals would be examined carefully by the Government.

It was on March 16, 1911, that Gokhale came back with his Bill " to make better provision for the extension of elementary education ". He had again to meet with formidable opposition. Gokhale himself had no illusions about the ultimate fate of his Bill. " I know ", he said in his closing speech on the Bill, " that my Bill will be thrown out before the day closes. I make no complaint. I shall not even feel depressed.....This Bill, thrown out to-day, will come back again and again, till on the stepping stones of its dead selves, a measure ultimately rises which will spread the light of knowledge throughout the land."* Now, twenty years after India attained freedom, free, compulsory and universal primary education for India's teeming millions has become a definite constitutional obligation, but one yet to be fully implemented.

The next landmark in the field of legislation on compulsory education was the Bombay Municipalities (Primary Education) Act, popularly known as the Patel Act, named after its mover, Vithalbhai Patel, passed in 1918. This was the first Act on compulsory education ever to be passed in British India. This Act was largely based on the provisions of Gokhale's Bill with certain modifications. The

* The motion to refer the Bill to the Select Committee was rejected by 38 votes against 13.



next two years saw a number of laws on primary education passed in the different provinces of India. These provinces were Bengal (1919), Bihar and Orissa (1919), the Punjab (1919), the United Provinces (1919), Central Provinces (1920), Madras (1920) and the city of Bombay (1920). Of these Acts, the U.P. and the City of Bombay Acts were applicable to urban areas. So was the Bengal Act which, however, was later changed enabling the government to extend it to rural areas. The other provinces mentioned above applied the Acts both to urban and rural areas. Like the Patel Act, the Central Provinces, Madras and the City of Bombay Acts applied both to boys and girls while the Bengal, the Bihar and Orissa, and the Punjab Acts applied to boys only. The age period for compulsory schooling varied from 6-11 to 7-12. Bengal adopted Gokhale's proposal of 6-10, while C. P. defined a child as one "of not less than 6 and not more than 14 years of age". Madras did not define the compulsory school age but left it to be prescribed by Government in any local area or for any particular community.

So far as financing the new schemes was concerned, it is to be recalled that the Patel Act (1919) did not place any financial responsibility on the Government. That was also the case with the Bengal and the Bihar and Orissa Acts. The U.P. Act, however, provided that Government might make rules laying down conditions under which it would bear a share of the cost of elementary education. The Central Provinces Act accepted the need for such grants with rates to be fixed by rules under the Act. It was left to the Madras Act to make provincial grants both determinate and statutory. In many of these cases, the Government agreed to make grants-in-aid of the new schemes. In the U.P. the Government agreed to bear two-thirds of the total expenditure while Madras agreed to contribute to the elementary education fund a sum not less than the proceeds of the education tax, and this statutory contribution was to be in addition to, and not in lieu of, the amount of expenditure incurred from provincial funds during the financial year prior to that in which the Act came into force. Local efforts to raise finance were confined to the imposition of the education cess. In some provinces power was taken to levy a new tax or to increase an existing tax in order to meet the cost of compulsory education. Bihar and Orissa laid down, however, that wherever



an education cess was levied, primary education should be free.¹⁰

During the next quarter of a century, that is up till 1947, further expansion of primary education was secured either by new legislation or by amendment of the existing legislation. For instance, the Government of Bombay appointed a Committee which drew up a ten-year programme of expansion with a view to doubling the enrolment of children in primary schools. The Bombay Primary Education Act of 1923 followed the recommendations of this Committee. This act repealed the Patel Act, which had been amended in 1938 and which was finally replaced by the Bombay Primary Education Act of 1947. Two important features of the new Act were, first, that it declared that the policy of the Government was to provide universal free and compulsory education for boys and girls to be reached by means of a definite programme of progressive expansion and, secondly, that the main responsibility for the introduction of compulsory education should devolve on the Government and not on the local bodies. Whatever might have been the reasons for entrusting the charge of primary education to the local bodies, the fact remained that till 1923 very few local bodies did come forward to introduce compulsory education. Under the new Act, the initiative for introducing compulsory education was still left in the hands of the local bodies, but the Government reserved to itself the right of requiring any local body to prepare a scheme of compulsory education and if that body fail to do so, Government could appoint its own officers to prepare a scheme and ask the local body to carry it out. As regards finance, the Government agreed to bear two-thirds of all additional expenditure incurred on extension of compulsion to rural areas as well as smaller municipalities and fifty per cent. of the same in the bigger municipal areas. In Assam, the Act of 1926, later replaced by that of 1947, also followed suit and provided for a grant-in-aid of two-thirds of the additional expenditure involved in all sanctioned schemes of compulsory education. In U.P., the (District Boards) Act of 1926 did not provide for any such specific grant but left it to be determined by rules under the Act. In Bengal, the (Rural) Primary

¹⁰ Rangnekar, *op. cit.*, pp. 519-520.

Education Act, 1930, extended the provision for compulsory primary education to rural areas for both boys and girls in the age-group 6-11 and also provided for the levy of an education cess ; but the Government did not prove very helpful in the matter of finance for it limited its own share to Rs. 23.5 lakhs only against an estimated revenue of Rs. 11,11,75,000 to be raised from the cess.

It is not necessary to go into the details of these and other Acts passed during this period. Almost every province in British India (as well as some of the Princely States) had made legislative as well as financial provision for the introduction of compulsory primary education for both boys and girls in urban and rural areas. The principle of compulsion was largely permissive in character in so far as the initiative for introducing compulsion was generally left to the local bodies. In spite of these efforts, however, progress of primary education was not very remarkable. By 1947, compulsion had been introduced only in 176 towns and about twelve thousand villages in the whole of British India. In Bengal, the Act of 1930 (providing for the introduction of compulsory education in the rural areas) remained completely ineffective. Even the Act of 1919 (providing compulsory education for boys in the urban areas) was applied only to a part of Calcutta city. In Assam, in spite of its two Acts, not a single area was brought under compulsory education.

A more distressing fact was that even where compulsion had been introduced, serious steps were not taken to enforce the same. This lack of performance in a very important field of national reconstruction was highlighted in the Sargent Plan prepared in 1944 which planned free elementary education for all children of the age group 6-14 within a period of 40 years. Another Committee under the chairmanship of B. G. Kher reduced the period to 16 years. But all these proposals continued to represent the nation's policy rather than any definite assurance of its eventual fulfilment. It was left to the Constitution of India adopted in 1950 to make the introduction of compulsory education for the age group 6-14 a constitutional " Directive " to be attained in the course of ten years. That period is already over.

On the other side of the picture there is the heartening fact that the rate of expansion of primary education in the post-independence period has been considerably stepped up. In fact, as Rangnekar



has pointed out, "this tremendous expansion has no parallel in the earlier history of elementary education, and the present indications are that it may be possible to fulfil the constitutional directive by 1975."¹¹ In 1960-61, the position was that, taking the whole of India, compulsory primary education had been introduced in 1,275 towns and 70,860 villages covering 5,578,468 boys and 3,033,145 girls. Among the States, Gujarat and Maharashtra have made very substantial progress. In Maharashtra particularly, the progress has been quite impressive. In that State, compulsory education has been introduced in 15,519 villages providing education for a total of 2,052,704 children which is nearly one-fourth of the All-India total. In comparison, Bengal's performance has been rather poor, with only two towns and 5,742 villages having experimented with compulsory education covering a total of 356,644 children. With the exception of Kerala and Madras primary education in all other States starts at the age of six. In those two states, primary education starts at five. The total duration of the education is also not uniform.

Apart from the earlier indifference for this important sector of the nation's education and the subsequent slow rate of progress even after the principle of compulsion had been accepted, the quality of the education offered in the elementary schools suffered from serious deficiencies. One was the lack of a clearly defined purpose or objective of such education. Secondly, its quality was poor due to half-hearted teaching. Thirdly, its relationship with secondary education was not clear. Last, but not least, profession could not be matched by practice because of (a) lack of suitable teachers trained in the art of teaching small children and (b) the incapacity of the national exchequer to bear the burden, which, again, was due to (i) the complexities of the problem and (ii) the general poverty of the mass of the people. So far as the lack of purpose is concerned, the curriculum followed in the schools had little relation to the social and environmental conditions in which the child was placed or to his field of experience, so that much of what he read at the school was learnt with difficulty but forgotten with ease. Actually, the child could not be interested

¹¹ N. B. Rangnekar, *op. cit.*, p. 527.



in what he was being taught, and taught clumsily ; nor did he know what to do with it at the end of his school term. His education was thus unrealistic and infructuous, particularly as he had little opportunity to continue his education beyond his little school. All that mattered were the three R's which at least helped him in making simple calculations, sign his name, perhaps read a letter or two and write a post card. Subjects like history, geography, or science made little impact on his mind, because apart from learning these subjects by rote, they were alien to his immediate range of interests. Indifferent teaching or class work, bookish or didactic, added to his frustration. Modern educational appliances or aids were practically unknown and teachers were not only untrained but only a little better than just literates. Nor was the education given in the village pāthāśālās or the lower primary schools integrated with secondary education. Western education in India practically started with the secondary stage. The reasons for this are too well-known to be repeated. In fact, it was the secondary and the higher stages of education that were regarded by our rulers as convenient media for the spread of Western education and enlightenment in India. Primary education did not fall within their range of vision. It is no wonder that it was purposeless. It did not even share the limited purpose which secondary education was designed to serve.

The greatest handicap was, of course, finance, or rather, the lack of it. In fact, it very largely explains the other deficiencies mentioned in the preceding paragraph. To a certain extent, the lack of financial resources was due to the apathy of the official classes and the pre-occupation of Indian non-official leadership with other problems. But the immensity of the problem of educating over 300 million people and the general poverty of the masses which severely limited their taxable capacity were decisive factors. The local cess as the chief source of finance for elementary education was tagged on to land revenue, itself an inelastic source of provincial revenues. Naturally, schemes of compulsory education were *ab initio* too ambitious to be put through at short notice. It is no wonder that the Sargent Plan (1944) with its proposed budget of Rs. 114 crores for free primary (and basic) education gave forty years for its implementation!



III

Basic Education : an Exposition

Meanwhile Gandhiji had started experimenting with his concept of " Basic Education " at Segaoon (Sevagram). His purpose was evidently to evolve a realistic and purposeful system of elementary education that would be built around the experiences of the child, and to devise a means of getting round the financial bottleneck. Every other thing can wait, but education cannot : this was the sense of urgency which inspired Gandhiji in formulating his scheme. The answer to his prayer was the old idea but in a new garb, of craft-based education which would be self-supporting through the sale of products turned out by the children themselves. The " Segaoon Method " already explained in a previous chapter, was spelled out in detail.¹² It became the subject-matter of a Conference held at Wardha in October, 1937, which, after a heated discussion, formulated the main lines of the scheme which came to be known as " Basic Education ". It was remitted for further consideration as well as for preparation of a draft syllabus to a Committee called the Basic National Education Committee under the chairmanship of Dr. Zakir Husain, then Principal of Jamia Millia Islamia, Delhi. This Committee reported in December, 1937. I have already discussed the report of the Committee in some detail.¹³ It is necessary to recall here the aim or purpose as well as the method of basic education with particular reference to its points of difference with the existing system.

Before we do that it would be better if we start with an authoritative exposition of the idea of Basic Education.

The philosophy of Basic Education is thus enunciated by Gandhiji himself, in his book on *Basic National Education* :

" The ultimate objective of this New Education is not only a balanced and harmonious individual, but also a balanced and harmonious society—a just social order in which there is no unnatural dividing line between the haves and have-nots and everybody is assured of a living wage and the right to freedom.

" By education I mean an all-round drawing out of the best in child and man—body, mind and spirit. Literacy is not the end of education, not even the beginning. It is only one of the means whereby men and women can be educated. Literacy in itself is no education. I, therefore, begin the child's education by teaching it a

¹² For details see Chapter VII, Sec. II.

¹³ *Op. cit.*, Sections IV and V.



useful handicraft. I hold that the highest development of the mind and soul is possible under such a system of education. Only handicrafts have to be taught, not merely mechanically as they are taught to-day, but scientifically i.e., the child should know the why and wherefore of every process.

" My plan to impart education through the medium of village handicrafts, like spinning, carding, etc., is thus conceived as the spearhead of a silent social revolution fraught with the most far-reaching consequences. It will provide a healthy and moral basis of relationship between the city and the village and thus go a longway towards eradicating some of the worst evils of the present social insecurity and poisoned relationship between the classes.

" It will mean a new educational technique where progressive self-reliance in all aspects of a healthy and balanced life—economic, physical, social, moral and cultural—forms the medium of instruction ; and the necessary knowledge of subject-matter is given, habits and attitudes formed and developed through this process."

The practical applications of this concept raised many doubts and controversies. Reference may be made to the sharp differences that had divided the critics of the various aspects of the scheme at the Wardha Conference (1937). Many of these differences persisted even after the scheme had been finally accepted, mainly because the principle of education through activity, in this case, through training in craft, was yet a novel idea in the country. The Government of India, in a small monograph, *The Concept of Basic Education*, published in 1957, made an attempt to clarify the basic concept of craft-based education in view of the fact that the term " has been interpreted and sometimes mis-interpreted in a variety of ways". The following are some of the relevant extracts which seek to clarify the issues :—

1. Basic education, as conceived and explained by Mahatma Gandhi, is essentially an education for life, and what is more, an education through life. It aims at creating eventually a social order free from exploitation and violence. That is why productive, creative and socially useful work in which all boys and girls may participate, irrespective of any distinction of caste or class, is placed at the very centre of basic education.

2. The effective teaching of a basic craft, thus becomes an essential part of education at this stage, as productive work, done under proper conditions not only makes the acquisition of much related knowledge more concrete and realistic but also adds a powerful contribution to the development of personality and character and instils respect and love for all socially useful work. It is also to be clearly understood that the sale of products of craftwork will meet some part of the expenditure incurred in running the school or that the products will be used by the school children for getting a mid-day meal or a school uniform or help to provide some of the school furniture and equipment.

3. As there has been controversy and difference of opinion regarding the position of craft work in basic schools, it is necessary to state clearly that the fundamental objective of basic education is nothing less than the development of the

child's total personality which will include productive efficiency as well. In order to ensure that the teaching of the basic craft is efficient and its educative possibilities are fully realized, we must insist that the articles made should be of good quality, as good as children at that stage of their development can make them socially useful and, if necessary, saleable. The acquisition of skills and the love for good craftsmanship have deeper educative significance than merely playing with the tools and draw materials which is usually encouraged in all good activity schools. The productive aspect should in no case be relegated to the background as has been usually the case so far, because directly as well as indirectly, efficiency in the craft practised undoubtedly contributes to the all-round development of the child. It sets up before children high standards of achievement and gives them the right kind of training in useful habits and attitudes like purposeful application, concentration, persistence and thoughtful planning. While it may not be possible to lay down specific targets for productivity at this stage, it should be the teacher's endeavour to explore its economic possibilities fully with the emphatic stipulation that this does not in any way conflict with the educational aims and objectives already defined. However, it has to be stated that, in the upper classes of junior basic schools and in the senior basic schools, it should not be difficult for States to lay down certain minimum targets of production in the light of carefully assessed experiences.

4. In the choice of basic crafts which are to be integrated into school work, we should adopt a liberal approach and make use of such crafts as have significance from the point of view of intellectual content, provide scope for progressive development of knowledge and practical efficiency. The basic craft must be such as will fit into the natural and social environment of the school and hold within it the maximum of educational possibilities. The idea that has been wrongly created in the minds of some people that the mere introduction of a craft in a school, e.g. spinning, can make it a basic school does grave injustice to the concept of basic education.

5. In basic education, as indeed, in any good scheme of education, knowledge must be related to activity, practical experience and observation. To ensure this, basic education rightly postulates that the study of the curricular content should be intelligently related to three main centres of correlation *viz.*, craft work, the natural environment and the social environment. The well-trained and understanding teacher should be able to integrate most of the knowledge that he wishes to impart to one or the other of these centres of correlation, which form important and natural foci of interest for the growing child. If he is not able to do so, it either means that he lacks the necessary ability or that the curriculum has been burdened with items of knowledge which are not really important and significant at that particular stage. It should also be realized, however, that there may be certain items in the syllabus which cannot be easily correlated directly with any of the three above centres. In such cases, there should be no objection to these being taught according to the methods of teaching adopted in any good school. This means that, even in the case of such lessons, the principle of interest and motivation and the value of expression-work will be utilised. In any case, forced and mechanical 'association' which pass for correlation in many schools should be carefully avoided.

6. The emphasis on productive work and crafts in basic schools should not be taken to mean that the study of books can be ignored. The basic scheme does postulate that the book is not the only or the main avenue to knowledge and culture, and that at this age, properly organized productive work can in many ways contri-



bute more richly both to the acquisition of knowledge and the development of personality. But the value of the book, both as a source of additional systematic knowledge and of pleasure cannot be denied and a good library is as essential in a basic school as in any other type of good school.

7. The basic scheme envisages a close integration between the school and the community so as to make education as well as the children more social-minded and co-operative. It endeavours to achieve this, first, by organizing the school itself as a living and functioning community—with its social and cultural programmes and other activities—secondly, by encouraging students to participate in the life around the school and in organizing various types of social service to the local community. Student self-government is another important feature in basic education which should be envisaged as a continuous programme of training in responsibility and in the democratic way of living. In this way, the basic school not only helps respect for dignity of labour but also becomes a vital factor in the creation of a dynamic social order.

8. Basic education should no longer be regarded as meant exclusively for the rural areas. It should be introduced equally in urban areas both because of its intrinsic suitability and to remove the impression that it is some kind of inferior education designed only for the village children. For this purpose, necessary modifications may have to be made in the choice of basic crafts for urban schools and even in the syllabus but the general ideas and methods of basic education should remain the same."

Thus the main idea of this type of education is to build up a new educational system for the age-group 7-14 round a familiar craft, a craft that already has its locale in the village itself. The training in the craft is not to be given in a mechanical way but the way and wherefore of the technique should be explained. Thus the student of carpentry would know not only the uses of the various tools of the trade but the various kinds of timber, where they come from, how to draw models and so on, and in the process of learning he would learn elements of mathematics, geometry, geography, agriculture and other relevant subjects. In other words, manual training would be the principal means of stimulating the intellect.¹⁴

The second great idea of Basic Education is that it seeks to build up the nation from its very base.

IV

Basic Education : A Critique

This concept of a craft-based education, it is well known, is not a novel idea. It forms an integral part of the elementary as well as

¹⁴ Gandhi : *Educational Reconstruction*, p. 17.



the secondary system in U.S.S.R. It has since been put into practice in the Republic of China. It was also being used in the shape of "Project Method" or the "Complex Method" in certain Western countries as Zakir Husain pointed out at the Wardha Conference. What distinguished Gandhiji's scheme from the others was the social purpose of craft training in addition to its economic and academic values.

The Basic School is designed to develop the social sense of the child. It is integrally related to the environment of the child. The syllabus is almost wholly intended to be used as the means to an end—to develop the personality of the child not on an ego-centric basis but in a socio-centric system. The activities of the school are to be carried on on a corporate or co-operative basis. At the same time there is an atmosphere of freedom because Basic Education does not depend on the printed pages of the text-book or the rigid limits of a prescribed syllabus. This is something very different from the intellectual drilling that the child received under the old system, or even under certain types of craft-based education followed in certain authoritarian systems.

Another point of difference between the concept of Basic Education and the traditional system is that the latter is mainly intended to test the capacity of the average student to amass unrelated items of information and the student is left to his own devices to co-ordinate them or to interpret them. This makes education a painful process instead of a creative experience, for most of the information with which the student is stuffed is utterly unreal to him. In Basic Education, the craft is not just a side issue, one of the subjects in the curriculum ; it is the central theme on which all the subjects of the curriculum are based. The product of the craft is the final outcome of this educative process. It not only fills the child with a sense of achievement, but makes the entire process of education purposeful. It ultimately becomes a creative process and helps to build up the personality of the child as a member of the community. It goes farther. It breaks down the barriers of class because everyone must undergo physical labour in the field or the workshop and learn to bear the sweat and dust of manual operations. This, above everything else, makes his sense of achievement doubly pleasurable for it is both an individual achievement and the product of collective teamwork.

There are two aspects of the Wardha Scheme which need to be specially mentioned. One is the idea that Basic Education should be self-supporting and that not only should the products of the craft be saleable and earn an income for the school but that the students should receive wages at prescribed rates. The second aspect of Basic Education to which attention may be drawn is its want of coherence with the general stream of education. There have been criticisms on both these points. So far as the first point is concerned, it has been fully discussed in a previous chapter of this book. The idea of children working for a wage has now been given up. The National Government in India has adopted the programme of Basic Education, set up the necessary organization and provided substantial funds for direct expenditure on the schools. The National Institute of Basic Education, Research and Training was established in 1956 to provide training and guidance to teachers and administrators of basic education. It also reviews the progress achieved. As regards the financial assistance provided for such education, it was estimated that direct expenditure on such education, both "junior" and "senior" (the entire course, it may be reminded, covers a period of 8 years, 5 years of junior and 3 years of the senior stages), was estimated to be Rs. 37 crores in 1962-63 as against the actual expenditure of Rs. 28 crores in 1960-61. It is expected that at the end of the Third Five-Year Plan, the basic schools would form about 36 per cent. of the total number of elementary schools.

Of considerable pedagogic interest is the want of coherence of the basic with the general stream of education. As long as all the elementary schools are not converted to the basic type, there will remain two parallel sets of institutions viz., the basic schools inclusive of the junior basic, the senior basic and the post-basic schools, and the other elementary schools which still outnumber the basic schools. Thus the Third Five-Year Plan was faced with the programme of converting nearly 58,000 elementary schools to the basic type. One reason for the slow progress of basic education was to be found in the *method* of its development. Till 1956, the usual method of developing Basic Education, described as the "compact area" method, was to select a small compact area and to convert every school in that area into a basic school. This has also been described as the "vertical process" of conversion. A Committee appointed to

assess the various basic schools in the country recommended that the vertical process be substituted by the "horizontal" process of "orientation". Under this process, while there will be no conversion as such activities, characteristic of basic schools as well as simple crafts which do not require a heavy financial outlay would be introduced in the non-basic schools as well so as to reduce the existing gap between the two types. Examples of such activities as recommended by the Assessment Committee include kitchen-gardening, community self-government, cultural and recreational activities, and the introduction of extension work. As long as this process of orientation is not completed, the co-existence of the two types of schools will continue to present problems of adjustment and equivalence. In spite of the encouraging picture drawn by the Assessment Committee about the quality of the basic schools and its alumni, there persist many elements of doubt and dissatisfaction with these schools. One criticism—that the excessive importance given to craft training interferes with general studies—can be readily countered by the answer that it misses the entire purpose and nature of Basic Education in which craft occupies the pivotal position.

Of a more serious nature is the complaint that the academic standards of basic schools are lower than those in the usual type of schools and that students from the basic schools are not readily accepted for admission to the high schools. While educationists are not particularly enthusiastic about the present "standards" of either type of schools, there is a real difficulty about the question of coherence or curricular equivalence between the two types of schools. The so-called high schools, standing midway between the elementary (including basic) education and University education, will be particularly out of tune. The difficulty would be especially felt by students coming from the basic schools to join the regular (non-basic) schools. Some of the more specific difficulties would arise from the fact that there are no graded text-books in Basic Education which could help to correlate the standards of such education with those of the regular schools. As compared to this, our traditional educational system stands more or less like a well-demarcated terrain with recognised landmarks in the shape of examinations, which a student must cross to enter upon the next stage of the journey. In short, the age period 14-16/17 which is the most crucial period in the regular



graded system of education when a student, under the traditional system, leaves a school to enter the University—these 3 or 4 years of his life are not adequately cared for under the Basic System. The fact that basic schools are almost wholly confined to the rural areas further highlights the problem.

This short description of basic education would be incomplete without reference to the important role that teachers play in running basic schools. No school is so acutely dependent for its success on good teachers as the basic school is. As there are no text-books, it is the teachers who almost literally have to carry the entire burden of Basic Education on their shoulders. The need for trained teachers is nowhere so urgent as in this system of education. It was expected that by the end of the Third Five-Year Plan, there would be 1,424 training institutions with about 200,000 teacher-pupils receiving training on basic lines. One would like to wish good luck to them were it not for the fact that the Education Commission has shown its preference for the regular type of primary schools but incorporating the essential feature of Basic Education, namely, its key-note of an activity-oriented educational programme.

Briefly, the position of the Education Commission is somewhat as follows. Apart from a pre-school stage of one to three years, the Commission visualises an elementary school stage of seven or eight years, consisting of a lower primary stage of four to five years and a higher primary stage of three years. The primary stage together with the lower secondary stage of three or two years "will provide a course of general education without any specialization".¹⁵ In other words, the Commission is not attracted by the idea of a Basic Education Scheme standing outside of, or distinct from, the general educational system of the country. In fact, throughout the entire body of the Commission's report, there is only a brief reference to Gandhiji's "revolutionary experiment in the form of basic education".¹⁶ Nevertheless, the Commission has wholeheartedly subs-

¹⁵ Education Commission (1964-66) Report, p. 30.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* p. 8.

cribed to the idea of "work-experience" in fulfilment of the need to provide "a corrective to the over-academic nature of formal education". The Commission, however, writes :

"The programme of basic education did involve work experience for all children in the primary schools, though the activities proposed were concerned with the indigenous crafts and the village employment patterns. If in practice basic education has become largely frozen around certain crafts, there is no denying the fact that it always stressed the vital principle of relating education to productivity. What is now needed is a re-orientation of the basic education programme to the needs of a society that has to be transformed with the help of science and technology. In other words, work experience must be forward looking in keeping with the character of the new social order."¹⁷

This does not mean, on the other hand, that the Commission is enamoured of the idea of giving an ineffective vocational bias to the formal schools. Thus, in regard to training in agriculture, the Commission is highly critical of the way in which it is being taught in the basic schools, or in general (high) schools or even in the so-called vocational schools (where, the Commission avers, the stated objectives of these schools—training sons of farmers who would go back to the land—is completely unrealised) and declares that "none of these courses or programmes have succeeded in imparting the needed vocational competence". It has been the opinion of most people contacted by the Commission that "the training given in institutions of formal education does not lead to vocational competence". The Commission further thinks that "over-specialisation at an early age is not at all desirable. Nor are we convinced that the narrowly vocational training is the best use that could be made of school time." So far as agriculture is concerned, the Commission points out that massive application of scientific knowledge and skills is basic to the modernization of Indian agriculture. The Commission, therefore, recommended that "the period which can be spent in school should rather be utilised in imparting sound general education".¹⁸

One would assume that this view would be equally critical of the kind of training sought to be provided in, say, weaving and

¹⁷ *Ibid.* p. 202.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* pp. 359-61.

spinning (textiles) or other craft in the basic or general schools. If it is supposed that the training in craft in basic education is intended to create vocational competence—it would, in the very nature of the case, be competence of a very inferior order which is quite out of favour at the present stage of development of science and technology—there would be general endorsement of the Commission's view. Attention has, however, been drawn already to the recommendation of the Assessment Committee in favour of the "orientation" of the existing elementary schools to the basic type, instead of continuing the vertical or compact area method. No protagonist of Basic Education as it has developed in recent years has ever suggested that the training in craft round which Basic Education would revolve is expected to produce a breed of technocrats. On the other hand, it is intended to give a necessary reorientation to the unrealistic and purely academic type of education which was impeding the mental and intellectual development of the children. Craft-based education, may we repeat, is designed to produce a social sense, a purposefulness, a way of integration with the life and experience of the community, in the minds of the young learner. The Education Commission, in spite of its insistence on one uniform general type of education for all children in the primary and secondary stages, nevertheless, recognises the necessity of orientation programmes which "can be made exciting and stimulating to the young mind". Thus agriculture and rural problems can be made an important part of work-experience which the Commission regards as "one of the essential components of a national system of education"; in fact, the orientation, according to the Commission, should be continued in the lower and higher secondary stages also.

The question about which the Commission has not made any specific recommendation is about the future of the basic schools of which there were more than 80,000 in 1961-62. The number of Junior Basic Schools has registered an increase of nearly 100 per cent. during the 10-year period 1950-51 to 1960-61, while the Senior Basic Schools have increased by nearly 300 per cent. During the same period enrolment in the Junior Basic Schools increased by 130 per cent. while that in the Senior Basic Schools increased nearly 50 times. The corresponding figures for the percentage increase in the number of teachers were 130 and 3,900 respectively for the Junior



and the Senior Schools. How far would it be possible, now, or even desirable, to disestablish these schools or to convert them into general type schools (with provision for work-experience) is extremely uncertain and doubtful. This introduces an element of confusion in the recommendations of the Education Commission. Perhaps it will be right to say that it was wrong *ab initio* to have set into motion streams which, bereft of all contact with the general stream of education at the higher reaches, were doomed to lose itself in the sands of ultimate futility. Perhaps the decision to write it off as an educationally bad investment is inescapable ; or perhaps an education of the basic type might be allowed to run its course as a self-sufficient system of rural education for those who would not be inclined to, or find time for, further education.

v

The Present Position of Elementary Education

The rate at which education is at present expanding is shown by the fact that inclusive of enrolment in classes Infant A and B and also class I, the number of students (all-India) receiving education in these classes has increased from 51,77,000 to 1,17,73,000 during the years 1950-51 to 1960-61. During the same period enrolment in the Junior Basic Schools increased from 28,46,000 in 1950-51 to 64,90,000 in 1960-61. Taking the primary and basic schools together the enrolment increased from 183 lakhs to over 266 lakhs. The direct expenditure on these schools more than doubled during the decade. The progress can be gauged also on the basis of the number of pupils in classes I to V. In 1950-51 the total number of pupils in these classes formed 42.6 per cent. of children falling within the age-group 6-11. In 1960-61, the percentage was 62.4. In 1965-66, the percentage rose to 78.5. The annual report of the Ministry of Education for 1965-66 records that at the end of the Fourth Five-Year Plan the percentage is likely to go up to 93.1. Though the prediction seems to be a little optimistic, there is no doubt that earnest efforts are being made to speed up the spread of elementary education and to fulfil the Constitutional Directive under Article 45 of the Constitution of India. The Directive was that there should



be free and compulsory education for all children between the ages 6-14 by 1960. That date-line has, of course, been passed. There have been several factors which have stood in the way of the timely fulfilment of this national aim. What is now being aimed at is to secure near-fulfilment of this objective for the age group 6-11. For the age-group 11-14, only 47.4 per cent. will have received education by 1970-71. An All-India Council for Elementary Education has been set up to advise the Union and State Governments on all matters relating to elementary education and preparation of programmes for the early implementation of the Constitutional directive of compulsory and free education.

It is obvious that if this directive is to be fulfilled, the State should not merely lay down the policy and the programmes ; it must come forward with adequate financial support. The average expenditure per annum on education *per capita* in India was only Rs. 7.7 in 1960-61. The percentage of expenditure on education to State revenues was only 2.4 for all-India. The all-India percentage of literacy in the same year (1960-61) was 34.5 per cent. for males and 13 per cent. for females. These percentage figures highlight the inadequacies behind our educational effort. A target of 20 per cent. of public revenues to be spent on education is a reasonable demand. In our plans, education is included under the head of "Social Services". It is desirable that it should be treated as a separate major head. A separate budget with specific commitments would be appropriate to the importance of this major item in the national balance sheet. These commitments can be effective only to the extent that it is given the priority it deserves.

VI

The "Age-Group"

The significance of the age-group 6-11 needs to be discussed. In most of the advanced countries—in almost all European States and in the United States of America—the minimum obligatory age of attendance is 6 or 7. In England, the age is 5 for the infant schools, 7 for the Junior (Primary) school. In the U.S.A. the age of entry



for the elementary school is 6, in the U.S.S.R., 7. Under the Wardha Scheme also, schooling would start at 7. As the first break in education, the age of 11 seems to be generally favoured. The primary school in the U.S.S.R., for instance, is a four-year School covering the age group 7-11. In England also, after the free Infant School (5-7), the Junior School covers the age-group 7-11. This stage is also free. In the United States, however, elementary education covers a period of 8 years from 6-14, after which a student enters the traditional High School (age-group 14-18). He can, however, leave the Elementary School at the age of 12 and enter a Junior High School (12-15) or a combined Junior and High School (12-18). There is thus considerable dovetailing in the pattern of primary-cum-secondary education in the U.S.A. In Sweden and Egypt also the change takes place at 12. What is meant to be emphasised in this connection is that there is a considerable consensus of opinion among administrators and educationists about the break in school life at the age of 11. This age-break is supposed to be a turning point in the development of the growing child's personality.

The Wardha Scheme, we recall, was intended to cover the age-group 7-14. According to the present structure of basic schools, this period has been raised to 8 years and covers the Junior as well as the Senior Basic School period. Attention has been drawn to the fact that this creates a vacuum for those students who wish to proceed to the higher course and enter a college. If the age of entry to a College is fixed at 16 plus (which is generally favoured by educational opinion), a student passing out of a basic school, according to Gandhiji's Scheme, would have to wait for two to three years before he can proceed to the higher course, or, alternatively to enter College when he is still not sufficiently mature or academically equipped. We have seen how the Danish People's Colleges stipulate a period when the students go back to their villages and follow the craft in which they have been already trained before joining a College. It is doubtful if the People's College idea would be acceptable to the Indian people to whom a University degree, for historical and other reasons, has become a status symbol, however indifferently it may have been earned, however inadequate it may prove to be in its employment potential. This attitude has to be corrected and the objective of education re-defined. An important corrective would

be to link secondary education to primary or basic education so that education at the secondary stage may make use facilities for vocational courses which would provide the students with opportunities for gainful employment through the development of skills—a necessary continuation of the basic education at the primary stage. These students might seek higher openings in the University faculties of Engineering, Technology and other applied sciences. It is stated that the number of students who are taking vocational courses at the secondary stage in India is probably the lowest in the world. Only about 12 per cent. of the pupils attending secondary schools follow vocational courses. This is not only accentuating the problem of unemployment and retarding economic growth but has created a dearth of "middle-level" skills for our rapidly expanding industries. This creates a bottleneck for the development of talent at the higher levels also, making the country dependent more and more on foreign experts and technicians as industrialisation proceeds.

It is in this context that the significance of the Sargent Scheme and of the Wardha Plan can be properly appreciated. Both these schemes were designed to cover the period up to the age 14. While, however, the Sargent Scheme allows a break at 11 at the end of the Junior Basic Stage and at 14 at the end of the Senior Basic, roughly corresponding to Class VIII of the High School stage, the Wardha Plan, based on the Segaon Method, is an integrated course of 7 years corresponding roughly to the full Secondary stage (Matriculation *minus* English *plus* training in a craft or crafts), completing it at the age of fourteen. As already mentioned, our Constitution carries a directive for introducing free and compulsory education up to age 14. This implies a break at the age of 14. While the Directive does not imply any break at 11, the break at the age of 14 may mean either that the free and compulsory education will be enforced up to the completion of the Senior Basic Stage, that is, class VIII of High Schools, or if the original Wardha Scheme were to be followed, up to the end of the full secondary course. The later hypothesis is, however, not tenable since the present school course, high school or higher secondary, ends at the age of 16 plus. It is now being proposed to extend it to 18 after a 12-year school course including 2 years' higher secondary course. In the United States of America, however, elementary education covers

a period of 8 years, from 6 to 14, after which the student enters the high school which is a four-year course. He can, however, leave the elementary school at 12 and enter a junior high school. In Britain, the junior school means the elementary school (free and compulsory) for the age group 7-11. In England, the Hadow Report (1926) as well as the Board of Education (1928) confirmed the age of 11 as the upper limit of the primary school. In any case a natural break occurs or is commonly recognised at the age of 11 or 12. It is the age when "a change to the atmosphere of a second school" is considered advisable. After this age there is also a change in the methods of teaching, and a greater "synthesis of intellectualism and manualism" is attempted through increased facilities for practical work. So far as the age of 14 is concerned, some of the leading countries do allow a diversion at this age. In U.S.S.R., for example, an extensive system of vocational education permits a student at the age of 14 to take up one of the terminal vocational programmes as well as on-the-job training programmes. These are the basic vocational schools to train adolescents for industrial employment as skilled workers. In the U.S.A., regular high school programmes are completed at the age of 18 but, as already noticed, a student can leave at the end of Grade VIII to join a technical or vocational high school. Hence a change of course as well as of the programmes of training is allowed at the age of 14 while the age of entry to a higher educational institution, academic or technical, is generally placed at 19. It is in this context that the proposal to upgrade the present 11-class schools to 12-class schools can be better appreciated.

VII

Aims and Objectives of Elementary Education

Every stage of education is adjusted to the age-group for which it is meant. Generally, school education covers the age-group 6-18. Though the period is an educational continuum, there are certain age-breaks at convenient points to mark different stages of the mental

and intellectual development of the child.¹⁹ Ideas vary about the exact point at which, for instance, the primary stage of education should yield to the secondary stage. Some experts would like to describe the entire continuum as "elementary education". Since the capacity, aptitudes and interests of the child as he progresses from childhood to boyhood and from boyhood to adolescence undergo significant changes, it has been found necessary to adjust the process of education in accordance with these changes. The broad division is, of course, that between primary and secondary. Gandhiji's concept of Basic Education was divided into Junior Basic, Senior Basic and even Post-Basic stages. The age-group covered by the Basic Education Scheme, comprising the Junior and the Senior Basic stages, and excluding the Post-Basic, is 6-14, though Gandhiji's original scheme was meant for the age-group 7-14. So far as primary education is concerned, it generally covers the age-group 6-11. The significance of the age-breaks will be discussed in a subsequent section. Of more immediate interest is the purpose and objects which primary education is intended to fulfil.

As the system has developed in India, elementary education which may roughly be considered as the stage of education covering the age-group 6-14 may be said to have had the following major objectives. In the first place, the main object of primary education originally was to impart literacy. Knowledge of elementary accounts (including "native" accounts) was also expected of students who had completed the primary stage. Secondly, for those who had completed the elementary course (age 14+) there were two other objectives, one of which was that it would qualify the student for a job in the lower cadres under the government. The Basic Education Scheme, however, was intended to be a self-sufficient course which, after it was completed, should enable the student to find a gainful occupation based on his training in a craft which he had received at

¹⁹ This is from the Report of Consultative Committee of the British Board of Education on "The Education of the Adolescent" (Hadow Report), 1926 : "Elementary and Secondary Education were still normally regarded as distinct and separate systems, but which are inappropriate and indeed positively misleading, now that the tendency of educational development is more and more to emphasise that they must be regarded as successive phases in a continuous process through which all normal children ought to pass."—Quoted by A. N. Sen in his book "Educational Reorganisation in India" (1944).



school. The other objective of elementary education was to prepare the student for admission to the secondary school. These objectives which arose out of the circumstances prevailing in India in the 19th century have now lost much of their original *raison d'être*. The objective of primary education is not exhausted in securing mere literacy. As we shall presently see, the curricular content of primary education, particularly in its upper stages, has extended far beyond the requirements of mere literacy. It would be further deepened if the proposals of the Education (Kothari) Commission are accepted.

As regards the job-orientation of elementary education, there are, again, two aspects of the question to be considered. One arises out of the fact that there is a large wastage in enrolment from the lower primary to the upper primary stages. Where education suffers a break midway in the primary stage, the result does not usually go beyond literacy. The problem in such cases is that of preventing a relapse to illiteracy of the child who is prematurely withdrawn from the school after completing the first two or three years of the primary school. The second aspect of the problem relates to those who complete the elementary stage. Previously, such students had no opening except going on to the secondary stage or finding a job in the lower subordinate staff of the Government. It was for this reason that though English did not at first figure in the curriculum of the primary schools, it was subsequently introduced either as an optional subject or as a compulsory subject at a certain point of the primary stage. However, the problem of admission to the secondary course or that of landing a ready job under the government was in the past not too difficult because the percentage of students completing elementary education was still comparatively low. With the gradual development of educational facilities and the replacement of the old indigenous schools by the new-type schools, both these openings for the educated boy—girls had not yet come to the picture to any appreciable extent—became increasingly difficult in the face of mounting demand. Administrators and educationists were thus faced with the twin problem of expanding general education and opening technical or vocational courses of study, both at the lower and the higher levels, so as to absorb a proportion of the students unable or unwilling to join a secondary school as well as to ensure a supply of qualified technicians trained



in modern methods for which a demand was fast developing in the spheres of industry and commerce.

Certain other broader objectives have also come into view. These objectives have to be considered in the perspective of India's national development. Education is now conceived of as an instrument of social change and social reconstruction. In India there is the further question of national integration, an urgent task in this multi-verse of languages, religions, communities, sects and what not. If these divisive factors are to be effectively and persistently countered, the mind of the Indian citizen must be properly oriented from his early childhood through education. Other objectives which have been claiming attention in recent years include the social, moral and spiritual values of education. Education is also regarded as an instrument for hastening the process of modernisation. All these objectives represent but different aspects of social change. The nation cannot ignore any of the stages of education, each of which has a complementary role to play in the fulfilment of these objectives. In fact, the proper direction of primary education is now an inescapable imperative of the situation.

VIII

Curriculum

We talk of the three R's—Reading, 'Riting (Writing) and 'Rithmetic (Arithmetic). It is, perhaps, not so well-known that in England, when the first Education Code was adopted in 1862, these were just the three subjects taught in standards I-IV in the English elementary schools. Six years later, in 1868, History, Geography and Grammar were introduced as optional subjects for standard IV. It was not until 1893 that the English schools were given permission to make one of these subjects obligatory at their option in addition to the three R's. In India, according to the Report of the Indian Education Commission (1882), of the three Presidencies, Bengal and Bombay provided for the teaching of only the three R's up to the Lower Primary Standard (that is, classes I-III) while Madras included Geography in addition. Of these the Madras curriculum appears to have been the simplest. It



consisted of "reading at sight with facility" a moderately easy book in a vernacular language, writing to dictation from the same book and arithmetic consisting of the first four rules, simple and compound, with easy miscellaneous questions founded on them; while Bengal's curriculum was a little more elaborate. Reading (in Bengal) consisted of a vernacular adaptation of Chamber's *Rudiments of Knowledge* and manuscripts written in current hand. Next, there was copy-writing. Arithmetic consisted of the first four rules (simple and compound), Mental Arithmetic on the native methods, Bazar and Zamindary accounts and simple mensuration; there was, finally, Cunningham's *Sanitary Primer*. The Bombay curriculum consisted of: reading and writing of the first and second Departmental Readers in the printed vernacular character, the first Departmental Reader in script vernacular character, recitation and explanation of the poetic pieces, writing to dictation in the printed and script vernacular characters (an easy passage containing words of two or three syllabus), copy-writing (large hand), Arithmetic (the first four simple rules), Mental Arithmetic (on the native methods) and Geography (boundaries, mountains, rivers, chief towns, roads, railways etc. of the local Collectorate to be pointed out on the map). The aggregate marks were 600 (pass mark 240) in Bengal, 80 (pass mark 40) in Bombay, and 350 (pass mark—one-third of total marks under each head) in Madras. So far as the Upper Primary Standard was concerned, that is, up to the end of a five-year course, the curriculum was as follows:

Bengal : *Compulsory Subjects*—Vernacular language, Arithmetic (vulgar and decimal fractions and simple proportion, and Native accounts), Euclid Book I, History and Geography of Bengal, Elements of Physics and Cunningham's Sanitary Primer. (No optional subjects).

Bombay : *Compulsory Subjects*—Reading with explanation and parsing the fifth Departmental Book, inclusive of the lessons on Elementary Physics and Natural History. Poetry, reading manuscripts in good current hand writing to Dictation from the Reading Book (in the printed and script character), Copy-writing, Arithmetic (vulgar fractions, simple Rule of Three and Simple interest), Mental Arithmetic (complete) after the native methods; and Bazar Accounts; and finally, History and Geography of India.

Optional Subjects—Elementary Drawing (Freehand and Model or object), Practical Geometry. Field Instruction in Agriculture, Printing, Carpentry, Joinery, Smithery, etc.

Madras : *Compulsory Subjects*—"Reading at sight with fluency and intelligence" a passage of ordinary difficulty from a vernacular book or newspaper,



writing to dictation from the same, Arithmetic (Reduction, the Compound Rules and vulgar fractions, and Mental Arithmetic applied to Bazar transactions).

Optional Subjects — any two of the following : Vernacular Poetry (recitation and explanation of 200 lines of verse from any approved anthology) and simple parsing, English (reading and construing from the Second Reading Book, dictation and oral translation, Elementary History (India or England or World), *Sanitary Primer* (Cunningham) and Robertson's *Agricultural Class Book* or any similar Primer.

The aggregate marks for the Upper Primary Examination were : Bengal (600 marks) ; Bombay (400 marks compulsory subjects) ; and Madras (210 marks). Besides, in Bombay, there was Vernacular Standard VI intended to prepare the successful students in the primary schools for lower grades of public service.

All this as it was in 1882. An analysis of the curricula of primary schools in 1902-1907 given in the fifth *Quinquennial Review of the Progress of Education in India*, (1902-1907), Vol. I, shows wide variations in the course offerings. In the seven provinces for which information is available, it is found that History was compulsory in three provinces, optional in one, not taught separately in one, and not taught at all in one, while Geography was compulsory in all the provinces except one (Madras). English as second language was taught only in Madras on an optional basis. Science was compulsory only in Bengal. Agriculture was optional in Madras, compulsory in U.P. and C.P. and Berar (Rural) but included as part of other courses in the other provinces. The only subject compulsory in all the provinces was Physical Exercise. The provinces listed in the Review were Madras, Bombay, Bengal and Eastern Bengal, U. P. Punjab, Assam, and Berar.

Up to this point, the criticisms of the curriculum as voiced in the different provinces, apart from the charge of a lack of uniformity, took the following lines. It was condemned as a slavish imitation of English practice ; as suitable for urban areas only and not for the masses ; as having ignored the needs of the children of the agricultural classes. Other criticisms related to the predominant role of examinations in influencing methods of teaching as well as learning, the emphasis placed on unintelligent memory work and the excessively literary character of the courses of study. The most important comment was, of course, that the curriculum did not pay



sufficient heed to the needs of the rural people. Incidentally, it was this defect which moved Gandhiji to formulate his Basic Education Scheme. So far as teaching methods were concerned, the fact that at the beginning of the century, only 18 per cent. of the teachers were trained, must have contributed to the low standard of teaching.

It is well-known how the fear of examinations even now overshadows the educational scene from the primary to the University stages. Yet in our old indigenous schools there was no system of examinations. The English type schools, however, retain their faith in examinations. There was a time when teachers were victims of a policy of "payment by results" which was introduced in England in 1862 and in India in 1865. Under this system School Inspectors used to examine every student of an elementary school in every subject, a test on the outcome of which the future of a teacher used to depend. This uneducational practice has since been discontinued though even now a school receiving the benefit of a grant-in-aid stands to lose the benefit if its students fared badly at successive public examinations. The curricular offerings have, however, improved. The basic schools have indirectly influenced the development of school programmes which now make increasing use of activity programmes. Kindergarten, Object Lessons and various school activities (such as school gardening) and craft training as also agriculture have become accepted subjects in the curricula of primary schools. The proportion of trained teachers has also recorded a substantial increase. We have seen that in 1901, the percentage of trained teachers was only 18 ; in 1937 it had risen to 37.

Reference may be made to two other developments in the educational field. One was the swing in favour of English as a school subject. The language of the ruling class, English, had come to enjoy an immense prestige and esteem. A good knowledge of English paved the way to a lucrative career which is one of the avowed objects of education. The other development which engaged the attention of educationists at the time was the hiatus that had developed between the urban schools and the rural schools. The products of the urban schools were fed on a curriculum that made it easier for them to join a secondary school or a gainful occupation compared to those of the village schools with a curriculum suitable to rural needs. Even the rural

people objected to agriculture being made a school subject. The reason was quite simple : the agriculturist parent thought he knew more about agriculture than a school teacher, and that it should be better taught by actual work on the field. This view is regarded by many as sensible though the report of an incident involving a rustic parent who thrashed the village schoolmaster because he had set his boys to work in the school garden might rouse other feelings. One outcome of this has been the steady transformation of the rural schools through the introduction of urban-type curricula in these schools. So far as English is concerned, this was introduced as a subject in the primary schools in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa and Madras. Bombay also introduced it in higher or secondary classes. Macaulay's admonition presumably took a little more time to percolate to the sphere of primary education. It was of course originally meant for secondary and higher education. Today after 20 years of independence, the nation's experts are having second thoughts on the place of English in elementary education. In most schools, it still figures in the curriculum of class III.

IX

Course Content : Teachers

The main point of basic or primary schools is that it represents a distinct stage in education. If elementary education is taken to cover the education that a child receives up to his age 14, it is well known that a large number of children in India leave school at the end of such education for work in the field or in the workshop. Others will normally proceed (funds permitting) to secondary schools, whether general, technical or vocational. The extension of compulsory schooling up to the age of 14 or even beyond may be linked to the fact that the years of adolescence offer greater educational scope than the age of childhood. The primary stage, as already explained, will be mainly occupied with the teaching of things of immediate value to pupils. The broader national objectives may be, as they will have to be, woven into the curricular framework of the primary as well as the secondary schools. School ceremonies, functions or festivals may be utilised for propagating a sense of India's national and cultural unity. Activity programmes may also have



a similar orientation. Teachers in such a set-up will also have to play a double role. They will not only be expected to discharge their primary responsibilities as teachers in their respective fields but also, in addition, to perform the duties of the nation's ambassador, in the truest and noblest sense, in the great Republic of Children. This is an imperative task for every nation-builder. The teacher is a nation-builder *par excellence*.

So far as the curriculum proper is concerned, it must, according to the current concept of elementary education, be taught, "in terms of the activity and experience, rather than knowledge to be acquired, or facts to be stored." This sets more or less the curricular pattern of these schools. The Hadow and Spens Reports have discussed the curricular content of different subjects at different stages fairly exhaustively, and can perhaps, be drawn upon for framing the same for the Indian schools after necessary adjustments. For example, the crafts to be selected should be such as are usually found in India and would have, therefore, already formed part of the student's experience. Spinning and weaving come easily to our mind ; so also paper craft, leather craft, cane and bamboo work, clay modelling, needle work and the like. The course of instruction at this stage is not to make it vocational in the strict sense but a medium that is in accordance with the range of experience and interest of the pupils. A. N. Sen, in an interesting monograph, published about 25 years ago, pointed out that manual training can have four distinct objects¹⁹ : (1) training of the sense, such as the eyes, hands, touch, as well as of mind ; (2) training for the cultivation of a bias in favour of manual work ; (3) training for acquiring a capacity for earning a livelihood—vocational training, which may be uni-directional *i.e.*, leading to a particular line, or general, allowing a choice in a variety of subjects ; and (4) manual training in a local craft, as a familiar vehicle to impart knowledge by helping to create interest in the unknown from the known. The academic or general aspect of such education should pay attention to, besides the usual drill in the three R's, correct pronunciation as well as expression of simple ideas. The children should also

¹⁹ *Educational Re-organisation in India* (1944), pp. 12-13 f.n.

learn the elements of hygiene, correct postures and movements, including elementary dance forms, the value of discipline, Nature study, games, drawing etc. When elementary education covers the basic or primary stage as well as the secondary stage, the objectives as well as the curricula would naturally be enlarged. The Wardha type of schools covering the age-group 7-14 were intended to be of this kind. In fact, it is at the secondary stage that the main objectives of the educational system—knowledge, building up of essential skills and the development of the right attitudes, interests and response—are valued as governing factors. From this point of view, educationists have drawn attention to the significance of the recent tendency of prolonging the duration of the courses and the deepening of the course contents. The increased duration of elementary education, the addition of class XI after Class X of the new Secondary (Higher Secondary) schools and the proposal to add yet another class to form a XII-Class School and the replacement of the two-year degree course by a three-year course, and so on—all these signify a rethinking on the problems of curricular adjustment as between the three stages. This deepening process is also necessitated by the rapidity with which new knowledge as well as new skills are being discovered. The suggestion has been put out by Dr.D. S. Kothari, Chairman, University Grants Commission, that in course of time the standard to be reached at the end of the secondary stage should be equivalent to the present Intermediate (pre-University ?) stage, and that the standard to be reached at the end of the first degree stage should be approximately equal to that of the Master's degree. This deepening process would imply considerable advanced thinking in curriculum making and in the development of newer and more efficient techniques of teaching and evaluation. In that case, the quality of teachers to be recruited for all categories of schools has also got to be radically improved.

There are two serious impediments to this course. One is the dearth of adequate facilities for training our primary and secondary teachers. The other is inadequacy of finance. The two are inter-related. On the one hand, there must be not only good teachers but also better teachers. On the other hand, a lot of money is required for investment in the improvement of school buildings, in-



cluding libraries and laboratories (for the science stream), if education is to be brought up to a higher level. In India, in the pre-independence days, a primary teacher earned anything between Rs. 10 to Rs. 15 per month. Even now, and in spite of the phenomenal rise in prices, 48 per cent. of the primary teachers get less than Rs. 100 per month, while 27 per cent. of the teachers draw more than Rs. 120 per month. About 2.2 per cent. get less than Rs. 60 per month which is even less than the emoluments of a Class IV employee of the Government. All educational authorities have condemned the poor pay-structure of our primary and secondary school teachers. Roughly speaking there are 10.5 lakhs of primary teachers, while the teachers in the primary and middle school stages number 16.40 lakhs. Of this last figure only 73 per cent. are trained teachers. While recommending increased use of trained teachers in these schools, the Education (Kothari) Commission have expressed the view that qualified and trained teachers should have the same minimum pay in the improved scale, whether they are employed in the primary or the secondary stage, or even the Collegiate stage of education. How can one expect a qualitative improvement of our educational system with ill-paid and discontented teachers ? It is not the purpose of this book to recommend scales of pay for our teachers. But it is necessary to point out that our teachers should not only be kept above want, but be provided with conditions for a decent creative life. Their own education and training should be made worth while to the community.



CHAPTER XI

SECONDARY EDUCATION

(A COMPARATIVE STUDY)

I

Definition

In any system of education, secondary schools occupy a special position. It stands midway between the primary and higher (University) stages of education and is integrally related to both. Broadly speaking, it is a stage of education which is designed to equip the student for a vocation in life at the end of the school course, or to prepare him for admission to the higher (University) academic course.¹ The first of these objectives is also fulfilled by the special technical or vocational schools, junior or senior, which a student can enter after completing his elementary education (or after reaching a certain stage of high school education) while the senior technical school course can be taken only on the completion of the full secondary course. The Polytechnics belong to this latter type. This means that there are as many as three age-breaks during the course of education from the primary to the higher stage. Commonly, one such break occurs at the age of eleven which marks the end of the primary stage, another occurs at the age of 14, marking the end of what is usually called the middle school course and the third at the age of 16 or 17 when the student completes the full secondary course.

It may be recalled in this connection that in India the Wardha scheme of education covered the age-group 7-14 which, according to Gandhiji, completes the "Basic Education" course. The Sargent Report (1944) also proposed an integrated education covering the

¹ Under the Basic Education scheme as introduced in India, secondary education includes the Senior Basic stage.



age-group 6-14. The present educational system of India accepts this age-break at 14 to mark the close of the Senior Basic education stage while the Junior Basic terminates at age 11. It must be noted, however, that there is some difference in the concept of basic education and that of secondary education. The former offers a complete and self-sufficient scheme of education, is craft-based and is definitely oriented towards equipping the student for a job or vocational career and to make him self-supporting. In other countries, this aspect of basic education is taken care of by special technical schools as well as by schemes of apprenticeship training, or trade schools. The secondary schools, on the other hand, follow, more or less, a course of general education in the usual school subjects in final preparation of the students for the school leaving examination. The duration of this course, however, varies from country to country. In some countries, as we shall see, it covers a period of 12 years, divided into convenient stages. In West Bengal, we have as present got two types of secondary schools, namely, the High School which covers a period of 10 years and prepares the students for the School Final Examination, and the Higher Secondary School, which covers a period of 11 years followed by the Higher Secondary Examination. The Higher Secondary Course is divided into a number of "streams" of which a student has to choose one at the end of Class VIII.² In West Bengal, for instance, these streams include Humanities, Sciences, Technical Stream, Commerce, Agriculture, Fine Arts and Home Science. This diversification of courses at the higher secondary stage follows the age-break at 14 and is intended to correspond to the diversity of aims, interests and abilities of different groups of students. Schools with such diversified courses are also known as "multi-purpose" schools.

It will be seen from the brief discussion above that it is difficult to give a precise definition to the concept of secondary education. Neither structurally nor from the point of view of curricular offerings is there any uniformity among the different types of so-called secondary schools. For instance, in the United States, children from 5

² Up to Class VIII (inclusive), the syllabi and courses of study of the High School and the Higher Secondary course are the same.

to 13 years old are considered to be of "elementary school" age. The elementary stage accordingly ends with grade (or class) VIII. The secondary school age-group is 14-17 years covering grades IX to XII. In India also, we find a variety of secondary schools as already indicated above. Thus there is a parallel system of schools of the basic and the non-basic types. While there are separate primary schools, the 10-Class high schools and the 11-Class higher secondary schools cover all the stages from primary to the final stages of secondary education. Again, during the last three years of the higher secondary stage, courses are offered which are specifically designed to provide for some sort of technical and vocational specialisation. This type of education is also provided in special types of technical or vocational institutions. Apart from the fact that it involves a duplication of effort, this multiplicity of schools and courses makes it difficult to lay down, or fix the nature and purpose of, secondary education as such, except in very broad terms.

The Secondary Education Commission (the Mudaliar Commission, 1953) laid down the objective of secondary education in the following words :

"The aim of Secondary Education is to train the youth of the country to be good citizens, who will be competent to play their part effectively in the social reconstruction and economic development of their country. For the proper functioning of democracy, the Centre (that is, the Central Government) must see that every individual is equipped with the necessary knowledge, skill and aptitudes to discharge his duties as a responsible and cooperative citizen."

The comprehensive phrase, "necessary knowledge, skill and aptitudes" is meant to include all the different objectives of secondary education, academic, technical as well as vocational. This is as it should be, for the concept of secondary education is no longer limited to a purely academic course, nor is it intended to be a purely technical or vocational course. The secondary course, in other words, is now held to include a hard core of usual school subjects covering a general field in which every student is expected to secure a certain measure of proficiency, as well as what may be regarded as "career" courses in which the student is expected to attain a degree of competency sufficient to enable him to qualify for a vocation or career after he has finished the secondary course. Needless to say, this is a new



development in the concept of secondary education in India but it is in conformity with the current educational practice in other countries.

Subject to the considerations set out above, we can arrive at the tentative conclusion that secondary education is not just a continuation of the primary stage. It is a type of education suitable to the needs and interests of an age-group corresponding to the period of adolescence. The aims and objects of such education also distinguish it from primary education on the one hand, and University education on the other. It is a stage at which students are allowed a choice of courses according to their aptitudes and interests. They have also the option of moving into special technical or vocational institutions, or even to go out to earn their own living on the strength of the knowledge and skill they have learnt at school. For this purpose, secondary education offers, or should offer, a complete and self-sufficient course, developing intelligence, knowledge and skill. The scheme of "basic education" is particularly designed for this purpose—that of providing a complete and self-sufficient education for the "young adult."

II

Secondary Education : Far and Near

A brief discussion of the structure of secondary education in some selected countries will further emphasise the diversity of the secondary education systems in different parts of the world.

A. U. S. A.

In the United States of America, the regulation of attendance ages for public school children is a responsibility of each State. Most frequently, the minimum age of entry is 7 years and the age of completion is 16 years. Some local districts require attendance from children 5-18 years of age. The present tendency is to regard the age of 5 as the beginning of school age. The nursery schools cover the age-group

3-5 with one year more for the Kindergarten stage. The primary schools go up from grade I to Grade VIII (corresponding to age 14). After this stage, the student can join either a comprehensive high school or a technical or vocational high school which offers a 4-year course (Grade IX-XII). In some cases, a student may join a junior high school at the end of grade VI, read upto grade IX and then join a regular high school for the remaining three grades, that is upto grade XII ; or, he can join a combined junior and senior high school (Grades VII-XII) to complete his high school programme. Thus the entire school programme in the United States consists of the following pattern of age-breaks, viz., $8+4$, $6+3+3$ or $6+6$, there being altogether 12 years of schooling. The State bears the legal responsibility for the public education of its citizens but wherever possible each State delegates responsibility to local agencies for management, operation and control of primary and secondary education. So far as the private nursery schools and Kindergartens financed by tuition fees paid by parents and contributions of private organizations are concerned, their increasing number has led many State Departments of Education to establish standards and to "accredit" these schools. A number of States have legally authorised the registration and approval of private nursery schools and Kindergartens, while some of the other States have developed standards, or voluntary plans, of accreditation for private schools. While the general practice in the United States was till recently to divide the 12 grades of school education into 8 for elementary and 4 for secondary schools, the present trend is towards a division on the basis of $6+6$ or $6+3+3$ years. The schools range in size from rural elementary schools, and even high schools, of 50 pupils or even less, to elementary schools of more than 1500 and city high schools of more than 5,000 pupils.³

In the United States, public schools account for the largest number of student enrolment. Thus in 1958-59, out of a total of 31,793,000 students, as many as 26,927,000 students attended the public school system from Kindergarten to Grade VIII, while non-public schools

³*Progress of Public Education in the United States of America (1958-59).* (U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare).

accounted for 4,693,000 students. Enrolment in grades IX-XII, similarly, shows a preponderance of public school students with 7,790,000 students, attending the public schools as against 1,002,000 in private and parochial schools. In October 1957, 96.5 per cent. of the total population of persons between 6 and 17 years of age were enrolled in schools. So far as the age-group 6-13 is concerned, 99.2 per cent., were in school. In elementary and secondary schools, the proportion of boys and girls was about equal, but in institutions of higher education men made up two-thirds of the total student enrolment. Again, while in urban areas 97 per cent. of the age-group 6-17 were in school, the percentage in rural non-farm areas was 96, and in rural farm areas 95 per cent.

Elementary schools in America have the object of providing for all children more and better education that will have a functional use in every day living. However, pressure on teachers and others engaged in school work to emphasise skills has led them to evaluate subject-content more carefully, particularly as it is related to the purpose of education. In the U.S.A., the search for talented students has led to the evolution of a special type of schools or special classes in existing schools. A recent investigation showed that the type of school known as comprehensive high school—one that offers college preparatory and vocational curricula and attempts to provide for all youth in the community—was capable of meeting the educational needs of the people. Many school systems have been experimenting along a line of compromise by opening special classes for talented pupils in the comprehensive high school. But a few communities were organising specialised high schools, *i.e.*, schools which offer a limited programme for students with special talents or needs.

It is a peculiar feature of the American system that very small schools exist along with very big schools. This is because some areas of the country, due to their sparse population, geographical location and terrain as well as inclement weather conditions, demand the continuation, for the present, of many small high schools. Some of the projects for improvement in such areas are using the techniques of multiple classes, correspondence courses, flexible schedule, school-aids, electronic means of communication as well as co-sharing of the services of specialists.



The standards of secondary schools in the U.S.A. are sought to be maintained by State and Regional " accrediting " agencies. Most colleges and Universities accept qualified school students without further examination or test ; but some of them, about 10 per cent. of higher institutions, regulate their admission through the College Entrance Board examinations. The National Merit Scholarship Corporation sponsors a Scholarship Qualifying Test for high school first semester seniors and second semester juniors of virtually XII-grade high schools, which prove some sort of a standardised achievement test.

So far as the financing of education is concerned, the expenditure per capita on education amounts to \$456 per year. The total expenditure for public elementary and secondary schools is estimated to be about 3.3 per cent. of the gross national product (which is the total value at market prices of all goods and services produced in the country during the year). In the year 1958-59, the proportion of school revenues derived from different sources were as follows : 56 per cent. from local revenues, 40 per cent. from State funds and 4 per cent. from Federal funds, the total expenditure being of the order of \$22 billions.

B. U.S.S.R.

Though, as we shall see, the Soviet system of education is organizationally as well as functionally different from that of the U.S.A., some of the fundamental problems which the two Governments have had to face have been more or less, similar. Both nations are committed to the principle of universal education ; both contain within their borders diverse national and cultural elements with different characteristic traditions ; and both have courses and programmes to educate and train millions of people. The problems are further emphasized, in both the countries, by the great diversity, within the country, in climatic conditions and topography as well as in economic resources. In spite of these points of resemblance, the evolution of Soviet institutions, historically as well as ideologically, has taken an entirely different line from that of the U.S.A. The Soviet education system is permeated by a point of view, by a theoretical approach and attitude,



which has been translated into practical terms as dictated by the institutional set up of its political and economic systems.

Historically, the geographical isolation of the U.S.S.R. from other parts of Europe as well as from the main streams of civilisation that influenced the character of the Western World prevented the flow of ideas, scientific, literary, artistic and technological, from across her frontiers and made her relatively immune from the impact of the Industrial Revolution, with the result that she entered upon the twentieth century a retarded country inspite of the fact that, like the U.S.A. she is almost self-sufficient in industrial potential and possesses some of the richest of natural resources in the world. There was another hindrance in the way of Russia's emergence as a strong and united nation. Like the U.S.A., the U.S.S.R. is also a multi-national State. She is also a multi-lingual State. While the American nation has succeeded in assimilating the original multi-national elements, in the U.S.S.R., by contrast, some 177 different minority groups speaking more than 125 languages and dialects and professing some 40 different religions, have lived side by side for hundreds of years, all the while struggling to maintain their ethnic unity, clinging to tribal customs and national traditions.* Today, these have been integrated into 15 political entities described as Soviet Socialist Republics (S.S.R.), 17 Soviet Autonomous Socialist Republics, 9 Oblasts (Autonomous Regions) and 10 Okrugs (National Areas or Districts). This has been made possible because of the monolithic governmental and party structure striving to secure complete Russification on the basis of Communism. The Communist Party works not only through the formal party organizations but also directly through the governmental channels.

Upto 1917, Marxists considered education as a weapon of the bourgeoisie by means of which the upper and educated classes themselves and their children were enabled to ensure continuing their rule and domination over the masses. In capitalist society, as it was explained by Engels, the bourgeoisie give the workers only as much education as conforms to its own interests. At the Geneva Congress of the First International, Karl Marx stated that education should be

**Education in the U. S. S. R.* (U. S. Dept. of Health Education and Welfare), 1957.

mental, physical (with gymnastic and military training) and technical (*i.e.* acquainting children with the processes of production). In his book *Capital* Marx wrote that, "there can be no doubt that when the working class comes into power as inevitably it must, technical instruction, both theoretical and practical, will take its proper place in the working-class schools". Thus were the Communists in 1917 armed with the theoretical basis of education for all, as well as some definite ideas of how that education might be used to increase technical efficiency in the new society which they planned to set up.

As in other spheres, Soviet educational policy is so oriented that the citizen is equipped to serve the needs of the State. Part-time educational programmes to provide adults with schooling equivalent to that in grades I-VII and the introduction of compulsory education for children of the age-group 7-14 have been designed to provide the minimum educational base for the many types of additional specialised training provided in the interests of the State. There is, in other words, a careful calculation or planning of the skills that are deemed necessary for giving effect to the State schemes of development. Organisations for the production of such skills are accordingly set up, and admission is strictly regulated, to fulfil the needs. For instance, in the field of athletics, talent is spotted, tested and selected on the basis of the sports events held periodically throughout the Soviet Union, for further training in the physical education schools at the expense of the State. The same is true with regard to the admission to the Universities, engineering institutes and other institutions, where again the State provides the expense. The excellence of those who pass out of the institutions is considered fundamental to the over-all advancement of the Soviet State.

Article 12 of the Soviet Constitution declares the right of all Soviet citizens to education. Seven years' schooling (age 7-14) was made compulsory in 1949. In 1955, an amendment to Article 121 abolished fees for education in grades VII-X and in higher schools with effect from September, 1956. Schools are opened, approved and run by the State which also determines the curriculum and methods of instruction. A number of educational establishments are maintained by public organizations such as Trade Unions, but under the over-all guidance of the State. Technical, industrial or agricultural training of a sort is also provided for those who are



employed in factories, State collective farms as well as at machine tractor stations.

The Soviet system of education is thus a State system and covers all levels—from pre-school to the University—as well as the cultural educational programmes for adults. There is no discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, sex, language, or national or social origin. Education is conducted in the mother-tongue but the basic curriculum is the same throughout the State. Children of the non-Russian-speaking Republics must learn the Russian language. Also, Russian literature, history and traditions are incorporated in their curriculum in aid of the process of Russification.

There are no elective subjects in the primary-secondary schools. As already pointed out, these schools provide a sort of basic education for further training in specialized schools. The curriculum is made up of courses in the physical and natural sciences, mathematics including trigonometry and mechanical drawing, among other subjects, because Soviet leadership believes that these subjects contribute most directly to the mastery and control of the material environment. It is reported that 70 per cent. of the advanced degrees conferred are in scientific and technological fields of specialization.

One of the interesting features of Soviet education is the statistical preponderance of women. Schools are, of course, co-educational. But in many of the Soviet semi-professional and higher educational programmes there is preponderance of women students. In Education they are 80 per cent. and in Medicine about 60 per cent., while in the technical and engineering fields, they are 30-40 per cent. of the total number of trainees. Another interesting feature is that in pursuance of one of the first Soviet decrees on Education, the State has been separated from the Church and the Church from the School. This decree has also prohibited the teaching of scripture in any school where general educational subjects are taught and has forbidden observance of religious ceremonies in the schools. The aim of education under the Soviet system is to provide a scientific-materialistic or atheistic explanation of natural and social phenomena.

The general structure of the educational system of the Soviet Union may now be presented. For children under three years of age there are nurseries or creches. For those between 3-7 there are full-time as well as seasonal kindergartens and play-grounds. There

are kindergartens also for the handicapped. Fees are usually required for enrolment in pre-school institutions. According to law, children at the age of 7 are required to enrol in the general primary-secondary education system. This system is a ten-year course of studies (7-17) with about the same number of hours and instructions as are spread over 12 years in the public school systems in the United States. The regular primary-secondary school programmes are divided roughly into 3 stages, namely, 4-year primary schools (grades I-IV for children of the age-group 7-12), 7-year what may be described as "incomplete secondary schools" consisting of grades I-VII for children of the age-group 7-14 with junior secondary schools for ages 11-14, and lastly, there are the 10-year what may be described as "complete secondary schools" with grades I-X for children of the age group 7-17. The curriculum is the same for each grade irrespective of the type of school. It may be mentioned that completion of the full primary-secondary school is a pre-requisite for higher education and advanced training.

After obtaining the Maturity Certificate on completion of the 10-year course, a student can go in for vocational training usually covering a period not exceeding 2 years, or other specialised courses, e.g. teachers training courses, engineering and medical courses, military training in academies, training in Art, in conservatories etc. Some of these courses may cover 5 or 6 years. Thus, while the course for primary teachers covers a period of 2 years, that for the secondary teachers may be spread over a period of 4 to 5 years. The engineering and the medical courses cover a period of from 5 to 6 years. Besides these, there are also semi-professional schools of about three years' duration after the 10-year school course. A student can also go in for "Technicums" which are also semi-professional schools, after completing education upto the 7th grade in school. In the sphere of higher education, graduation diploma from higher educational institutions is obtainable at the age of 23; for a post-graduate "Candidate of Sciences" the period is 2 years.

Higher education in the Soviet Union implies professional training in a basic field of knowledge. The actual period of study for a diploma course ranges from 4 to 6 years depending upon the field studied. Admission to higher educational institutions is usually based on competitive entrance examinations although honours



students from the senior secondary schools and technicums are eligible to be admitted automatically. There is no degree on graduation but a diploma is awarded on the successful passing of State examinations after completing the programme of instructions or on the basis of a project or thesis, sometimes both. The Union Republic Ministry of Higher Education exercises supervisory control, including control of general academic standards over all Soviet higher educational systems and semi-professional schools. It controls teaching staff, curricula, text books, enrolment quotas and the assignment of graduates.

To return to secondary education. Since the October Revolution, all schools, private, religious and specialized, have been transferred to the jurisdiction of the State. Education is generally subordinated to the aims of the Communist Party though, immediately following World War II, the attitude of the Party and the State changed towards such organizations as the Pioneer and the Komsomol. In 1944, they were forbidden to interfere with the work of the teachers or to criticize them at meetings or in school wall newspapers. No longer were they authorized to make school inspections without permission of the local educational authorities or recruit pupils to be employed in socially useful work. In other words, the emphasis now turned on the need for promoting ability rather than mere political consciousness. A new communist leadership consisting of the outstanding students—the potential scientists and scholars—thus displaced the old leadership.

There has recently been an emphasis on quantity, the desire to increase the number of students doing the secondary school programme. Between 1951-55 a four-fold increase was announced in the number of pupils passing out of the Soviet 10-year schools. Soviet secondary education, as already noted, became completely free only after September, 1956, when the tuition fees that used to be charged since 1940 for grades VIII-X were abolished. Text books, writing materials and school uniforms are, however, charged for. Soviet policy is now to make ten years of school education compulsory and universal. The greatly increased output of secondary school passed graduates, only a small fraction of whom could be accommodated in the higher educational institutions, underlined

the need for training the students for non-professional jobs and the introduction in the school programme of polytechnical training.

There is one feature of the Soviet school system which is worth mentioning in these days of a general lack of discipline found among students in almost all the developing countries. Once a child reaches the school age in Russia, he is presented with a copy of "The Rules for Pupils" which are to govern his conduct within and outside of the school. Promulgated on August 2, 1942, these rules are required to be committed to memory by the student on pain of expulsion. I make no apology for reproducing this code of conduct in full because of its relevance to the situations which we have to meet with frequently in our own country. It may be mentioned in this connection that some of the American Colleges and Universities also insist on the due observance of "codes of conduct" framed by those institutions. They are in the U.S.A., an integral part of "student government."

"THE RULES FOR PUPILS" PROMULGATED BY THE SOCIETY OF PEOPLE'S
COMMISSARS OF THE RSFSR (AUGUST 2, 1943)

It is the duty of every school child :

1. To acquire knowledge persistently in order to become an educated and cultured citizen and to be of the greatest possible service to his country.
2. To study diligently, to be punctual in attendance, and not arrive late at classes.
3. To obey the instructions of the school director and the teachers without question.
4. To arrive at school with all the necessary text books and writing materials ; to have everything ready for the lesson before the teacher arrives.
5. To come to school clear, well-groomed, and neatly dressed.
6. To keep his place in the class room clean and tidy.
7. To enter the class room and take his place immediately after the bell rings ; to enter and leave the class room during the lesson only with the teacher's permission.
8. To sit upright during the lesson, not leaning on his elbows and not slouching ; to listen attentively to the teacher's explanations and the other pupils' answers, and not to talk and let his attention stray at other things.
9. To rise when the teacher or the director enters or leaves the room.
10. To stand at attention when answering the teacher ; to sit down only with the teacher's permission ; to raise his hand if he wishes to answer or ask a question.
11. To take accurate notes in his assignment book of homework scheduled for the next lesson, and to show these notes to his parents ; to do all the home work unaided.



12. To be respectful to the school director and teacher ; when meeting them, to greet them with a polite bow ; boys should also raise their hats.
13. To be polite to his elders, to behave modestly and respectfully in school, on the street and in the public places.
14. Not to use coarse expressions, not to smoke, not to gamble for money or for any other objects.
15. To protect school property ; to be careful of his personal things and the belongings of his comrades.
16. To be attentive and considerate of old people, small children, the weak and sick ; to give them a seat on the trolley or make way for them on the street, being helpful to them in every way.
17. To obey his parents, to help them to take care of his small brothers and sisters.
18. To maintain cleanliness and order in rooms, to keep his clothes, shoes and bed neat and tidy.
19. To carry his student's record book with him always, to guard it carefully, never handing it over to any one else, and to present it upon request of the teacher or school director.
20. To cherish the honour of his school and class and defend it as his own.⁵

This insistence on discipline is not confined to the school code alone. It is to be found in parents' magazines, journals for teachers., delivered through "thousands of lectures" to parents annually. The withdrawal of "group approval" is supposed to replace corporal punishment or "frightening threats" (e.g. bogeys) for breach of discipline. In school there is often a form of weekly sessions during which the wrong doings of each child are brought up before his class mates by the class counsellor who afterwards explains the correct and expected behaviour. Generally speaking, the Soviet system does not approve of corporal, or frequent and severe, punishments. Conformism is enforced through group pressure.

C. ENGLAND

The view was expressed in a preceding paragraph that secondary education is not just a continuation of the primary stage and that

⁵ Sovetskaya Padagogika (Moskva), Vol. 10, Oct., 1943, p. 2, quoted in the book "Education in the USSR" Bulletin 1957, No. 14, published by the Office of Education, U. S. Dept. of Health, Education and Welfare, 1958.

it is a type of education appropriate to the interests and needs of an age-group corresponding to the period of adolescence. This view is not apparently shared by the Hadow Report on the Adolescent (1926). The view taken therein is that "the tendency of educational development is more and more to emphasise that they must be regarded as successive phases in a continuous process through which all normal children ought to pass." Actually, the two views are not contradictory. For instance, the primary stage of education is intended mainly to provide the pupil with a basic equipment in the tools of learning. The successive stages must naturally be based on the further extension of the process but adjusted to the attitudes, interests and capacities of the children belonging to the different age-groups. Accordingly, the development of the child takes different directions in line with the differences in their aptitudes, correlated to their age differentials. All along the line the child continues to develop as the educative process begins to unfold the child's latent powers and capacities. It is to that extent a process that never ceases. But there are twists and turns, as one age-break succeeds another, or as one stage of education leads on to a new stage. The process may be described, to borrow Lester Ward's phrase, as sympodial. Let a hundred flowers bloom, a hundred thoughts contend, in the field of education, in the different areas of specialisation ; and so one comes out as a teacher, another a doctor, a third a technician, a fourth an opera singer, a fifth a painter, and so on. Education is the preparation for life for every one of these, a training provided for building up the occupation suited to the educand's needs.

That is why the educational system of a country cannot be a unilinear system. It is a multi-linear concept. The elementary education system is the foundation on which the multi-form educational super-structure is built. There must, of course, be a system of basic education. In the United Kingdom, this comprises, in the general system, a period of about 10 years, from infant, through the junior, upto the Senior (Central or Modern) School. The age-group covered is 5-15. Education upto this stage is compulsory as well as free. A student, however, can leave school at the age of 13 to join a four-year technical, commercial or arts school and then, at the age of 16 plus he passes on to a technical, commercial or arts college. Or, alternatively,



he can go in for liberal education, and at the age of 15 he can join a secondary school, and after two years, pass on to the University, or *via* the Sixth Form, to a teachers' training course (two years). Or, he may approach the secondary school *via* the "grammar school" which he may join at the age of 11. Both the grammar school and the secondary school run alongside the general system and are meant for fee-paying students.

The most characteristic, and at the same time, most hotly discussed, British institution is the Public School. It is said that the Public School is a misnomer. It is completely non-public and private, wealthy and richly endowed, exclusive and independent. It caters to the needs of the upper classes of England with high fee rates. It stands at the apex of a sort of class hierarchy among British schools. It is usually entered at the age of 13 or 14 after the pupil has finished with a private or preparatory school, or with a pre-school stage under a Governess or in a nursery school. The elementary school on the other hand, is for the less affluent section of the society. These schools, as already indicated, are free; the others are fee-paying. There is some overlapping but, in the main, the whole system is divided into two distinct divisions, each presenting a historical phase of development.

In England, the king-pin of the secondary educational system including elementary education is the Board of Education. During the early days of educational thinking in England, when the need for a national system of education was being felt, towards the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century, the vital question was whether the clergy of the Established Church was to control the national education. By the third decade of the nineteenth century, there were over 13,000 schools connected with the Church with a total attendance of well over 400,000. There were wealthy endowments and substantial charities which sometimes led to great abuses, ultimately leading to the establishment of the Charity Commission of 1853. Meanwhile the State had entered the field of education through a system of annual grants voted by Parliament. Another landmark of the period was the passing of the Grammar Schools Act in 1840. The Grammar Schools, originally concerned with classical education, had fallen into decay. The Act of 1840 helped to reorganize a number of ancient endowments and had the



object of providing an improved elementary education in the place of an inefficient teaching of classics. The establishment of normal schools or teachers' training institutions and the inauguration of the teacher-pupil system (under which apprenticed pupil teachers received a prescribed course of instruction under the head teacher) as well as the stipendiary monitorial plan of teaching, with the help of maintenance grants from the State, marked the end of the system of relying on voluntary effort for providing training for teachers. State aid for education increased rapidly in volume and scope from a mere £20,000 in 1832 to £663,400 in 1858.

This increasing interest of the State introduced a new approach to education other than denominational and drew forth criticism from those who still believed in the ideal of voluntary educational effort. A Royal Commission of Enquiry headed by the Duke of Newcastle was appointed in 1858 to investigate the state of popular education and to consider questions of extending sound and at the same time cheap education to all classes of people. It is interesting to observe that while the Commission found that only one out of every twenty children was attending a school whose efficiency could in any way be guaranteed by the State, it rejected the case for free and compulsory education in view of the religious difficulty and in support of what may be called the individualistic principle. To remove the defects of teaching and the inefficiency of schools the Commission devised the scheme of what is known as "payment by results". This was formally introduced in the Revised Code of 1862 issued a year after the Report of the Newcastle Commission. This system, which continued in one form or another till 1904, made the payment of grant depend upon the result of the individual examination of the scholars. Several other measures followed in quick succession, including the Acts of 1870 and 1876, until the appointment of a Royal Commission headed by Viscount Cross in 1887. This Commission discussed the educational problem in all its aspects, political, administrative, religious and scholastic. Its report laid the basis of many of the provisions of the Education Act of 1902. It is to be noted that one of the developments which followed the Cross Report was the virtual establishment of free education by the Act of 1891. This was made possible by the device of "fee grants" made by Parliament



in lieu of fees. Other measures followed which resulted in making elementary education free and within reach of every child.*

Corresponding to the Cross Commission of 1887, another Royal Commission under the presidentship of Lord Bryce was appointed in 1894 to enquire into secondary education. It was as the result of the recommendations of this Commission that the Board of Education Act was passed in 1899. This Board brought under one Central Office the existing Central authorities dealing with education, namely, the Department of Science and Art, the Education Department and the Charity Commission (in so far as it dealt with educational endowments). The Act also provided for a consultative Committee, two-thirds of the members of which should be qualified to represent the views of University and other bodies interested in education, for advising the Board of Education on any matter referred to the Committee by the Board. In 1902, the Board underwent a tripartite division, corresponding to the three branches of education, elementary, secondary and technological.

The most important development in the realm of English education, historically speaking, has been the Education Act of 1902. It was hailed as "the veritable charter of incorporation of English education, hitherto consisting of disconnected and often discordant elements." This Act made the Council of every County and County-Borough the Local Education Authority (L.E.A.) for higher and elementary education. All parliamentary grants were made payable to the Local Education Authority instead of to the managers. It was laid down that the L.E.A. should "consider the educational needs of their area and take such steps as seem to them desirable, after consultation with the Board of Education, to supply or aid the supply of education other than elementary and to promote the general co-ordination of all forms of education." (Part II of the Act). Other legislation quickly followed to remove the deficiencies of the system introduced under the Act of 1902 or to provide for other reforms. One of the most important measures

*Earlier, in 1876, Disraeli's Government had passed a law introducing compulsory universal attendance at schools. In that year annual grants to schools had increased to £1,600,000.

adopted was the Code of 1904. This Code set forth "a properly co-ordinated curriculum suitable to the needs of the children, with an indication of the relation which the various subjects of instruction should bear to each other, in place of the relatively haphazard list of possible branches of knowledge which were formerly presented to the choice of individual schools and authorities".

As regards elementary education, the Act of 1902 makes the L.E.A. responsible for all secular instruction in public elementary schools not provided by them and also makes elaborate provisions for management as well as maintenance of schools, establishment of new schools, aid grants etc. As already mentioned above, all parliamentary grants were made payable to the L.E.A., instead of to the managers of individual schools. The County Council must, however, charge a proportion of not less than half or more than three-fourths of all capital expenditure and liabilities, including rent, on account of the provision or improvement of any public elementary school of the parish which is served by the school. On the other hand, income from all endowments was to be paid to the local authority concerned for relief of the parochial rate. Regarding aid grant, the Act introduced a new aid grant payable to the L.E.A. in respect of the number of scholars in average attendance in schools maintained by them. The managers of schools were ordered to carry out the directions of the L.E.A. as to the secular instruction to be given in the schools including any directions with respect to the number and educational qualifications of the teachers as well as for the dismissal of any teacher on educational grounds. Regarding appointment of teachers, while it required the consent of the L.E.A., such consent might not be withheld except on educational grounds. Provision was made for an Education Committee associated with the Councils on lines approved by the Board. These Committees should consist of persons with experience in education as well as persons conversant with the needs of the various kinds of schools in the area concerned. All matters relating to the exercise by the Council of powers conferred under the Act except that of raising a rate or borrowing money, should be referred to the Committee.⁷

⁷ *Vide Article on "Education (National System)" in the Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. 7 (14th Edition).*



As in the case of other countries, so also in England, the problem of wastage of elementary education, now that large public funds were being spent upon it, attracted the attention of the Government when the question of "continuative instruction" for the benefit of working adolescents was considered by a Committee of the Board of Education set up in 1909. This Committee recommended smaller classes in elementary schools and increased training in handwork as a basic training for agricultural and industrial life. It also raised the age of compulsory attendance to 13 and ultimately 14. This was subsequently incorporated in the Education (Fisher) Act of 1918 which further empowered the local authority to extend the compulsory school age to 15. The Committee's views about the establishment of "continuation schools" were also given statutory shape in the Act of 1918. The Act introduced a compulsory system of part-time education after the close of the elementary school period. "Young persons" between the ages of 14 and 18 were required to attend a continuation school for 320 hours a year unless exempted. The Act also made provision for central schools for the older children in the elementary schools. Local authorities were also required to co-operate in providing for the preparation of children for further education in schools other than elementary and for their transference at suitable ages to such schools.

It is also interesting to note that it was only in 1920 that for the first time in the history of English education, a national scheme of salaries was adopted both for elementary and secondary school teachers, known as the "Burnham Scale." This was secured through the labours of a Committee, of which Lord Burnham was the Chairman consisting of representatives of local educational authorities and teachers. Earlier, in 1918, the Teacher's Superannuation Act had established a liberal pension system. Subsequent modifications of the salary agreement have made the position of teachers much better in all types of schools than it was before 1920.

Another interesting point to notice about the secondary education system in England is its relationship with the University. In 1914, the Board of Education issued proposals for the recognition of two grades of examination, one of which was meant for pupils of the age-group 16-17 and the other for 18-19. These were to be conducted by University examining bodies. Following these recommen-



dations, the Secondary Schools Examinations Council, including representatives of the examining bodies, local education authorities as well as the teaching profession, was established in 1917. Since then the first and the second school examination of one or the other of the eight University examining bodies have now become a useful element in the organization not only of the schools under the Board's control but of secondary schools of every kind. It is also to be noted that the Board pays the examination charges of each pupil of the grant-aided schools up to a maximum of £2. The first and second school examinations have facilitated entry to the Universities as well as to commerce and industry. To-day the secondary education system of England provides for the recognition of any type of advanced work, that is, not merely in such school subjects as classics, mathematics, science, geography etc., but also in such subjects as music and art. Besides schools on the grant list, there are also schools which are "recognised as efficient". One aspect of the progress of secondary education is shown by the fact that between 1908 and 1926, the total number of boys proceeding to the Universities increased from 695 to 2057 and that of girls from 361 to 1312. In 1927-28, the total number of "free-place" pupils was 131,309 compared to 57,933 in 1914-15. This free place system together with the liberal grant of scholarships has helped to increase the standard and efficiency of the schools. In 1920 the Board instituted about 200 state scholarships to be awarded to pupils of grant-aided schools proceeding to Universities, the amounts being such as to meet the cost of the entire University education of the scholar.

As already noticed, education is completely free upto the elementary school standard. This has been achieved through successive stages and now practically covers the age-group upto 16. Special types of education, apart from the education received in private or unaided schools, are not free. For some years there has been a persistent demand for higher stages of elementary education, such as the higher grade schools, higher elementary schools, senior schools, Central schools, modern schools etc. But as the pupil enters the technical, commercial or arts schools (age group 13-16) or the corresponding Colleges (age group 16 plus), he has to pay fees along with the students coming from the public schools, grammar or county schools.



In short, the English education system, inspite of the reorganization effects of the Acts of 1902 or 1918 still presents a bewildering variety of choice of courses. This is not surprising from the point of view of the curricular content of the courses.

Choudesley Brereton, writing on "School and Curriculum" in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (14th. Edn.) makes the following points regarding the curricular construction of secondary schools. First, a scientific curriculum as a whole should be "composed of carefully selected ingredients with a clear objective in view in place of a conglomeration of supposed indispensable subjects." Secondly, the curriculum exists for the average pupil and not the average pupil for the curriculum. Both the principles were slow to be recognised in England. Thirdly, the inclusion of a particular subject is not to be decided by its supposed intrinsic value alone, but either by the duration of the educational life of the pupil or by the nature of his future vocation. Finally, every complete type of education should have a sound basis of general culture with some degree of specialisation at the top. Dr. Brereton then gives a diagram to show how far this objective was being realised in practice. The diagram works out as follows :

<i>Stage and Age group</i> From	(goes to)	<i>Stage and Age group</i> To
(a) Preparatory (5-11)		Secondary (11-16)
(b) Secondary School (11-16)		Higher Secondary (16-18 or 19) or Higher Technical (part or full-time) including Art schools.
(c) Higher Secondary Schools (16-18 or 19)		University (General, Art or Science 19-21 or 22). or Technological Schools or Commercial Schools or Royal School of Art.
(d) University (19-21 or 22)		Research (21 plus) or Post-graduate training (1 year) Law.

Or, it may be put in another form as follows :

<i>Stage and Age group</i>	<i>(goes to)</i>	<i>Stage and Age group</i>
(i) Infants—Junior Dept. (5-11)		Secondary (11-16) or Central or Modern School (15) or Higher Grade Senior (15) or Ordinary post-primary (14-15) Trade Schools (13-15 or 16) Commercial Schools (13-15 or 16) or Day Continuation classes (14-16)
(ii) Central (or Modern) School (15-16)		Higher Secondary (16-18) or Higher Trade (16-17)
(iii) Higher Secondary		As in (c) in the preceding chart
(iv) Higher Trade (16-17)		Training Colleges (2 years)

Besides these, there are the Day Continuation classes for the age group 14-16.

The Evening Schools meant for the age group 14 plus consists of the preparatory stage (14-16), the Elementary Senior Stage (16-18) and the Advanced Senior Stage (18+). At the preparatory stage, the student takes the Junior Commercial (or Technical) School after which he may pass on to the next stage of Commercial and Technical (including Art) Education (Elementary Senior). After this he may either join a University (General, Commercial or Technical course) or take up one of the specialised courses (such as Accountancy, Insurance etc.) ; or may take up a course in General (Adult) Education.

D. CHINA

The two Asiatic countries I propose to study in this series are China (mainland) and Japan. Both present some difficult as well as interesting features.

In the case of China, the difficulty is mainly political. The result is that an independent pedagogic assessment of the Chinese educational system is almost impossible. It is, of course, possible to



simplify and say that in China, education is politics and politics is education. The "politics" means of course, the Party line. In other words, the Chinese educational system has the monotone imprint of its political credo in all its phases and aspects. Flowing from this fact there is the further difficulty of a singular lack of an objective or comparable standard of assessment of the system.

In the case of Japan, the difficulty arises from the consequences of Japan's defeat in World War II and subsequent American Occupation. Naturally one will have to set off the radical reorganisation of the educational system of Japan following the report of the 27-member U.S. Education Mission (1948) and the promulgation of the Fundamental Law of Education (1947) against the background of the older system prevailing prior to the Occupation, particularly as on many vital points there was a clean break with the past involving a departure from long-established traditional values.

So far as China is concerned, my main source of information is, of course, Professor K. E. Priestley's authoritative book, *Education in China*.^{*} This book is valuable for many reasons. An eminent educationist himself, Professor Priestley is personally well-acquainted with the educational systems of both China and Taiwan, having had received "open house" invitations from both the Governments. Secondly, the book is a bold attempt at an objective presentation of the Chinese educational effort, particularly after the advent of the Communes, both urban and rural, with its increasing emphasis on the "developing divergence between what education embraces in China and what education means elsewhere". Thirdly, Professor Priestley makes copious use of Chinese authoritative sources at different levels, giving the reader an opportunity of sharing in the appraisal of the situation given by the learned author after hearing the other side instead of taking the facts on trust. It must, however, be mentioned that Professor Priestley's account is mainly based on, or derived from, the strategy of China's Second Five Year Plan—of the "Great-Leap-Forward" days. Since then there has been a discernible

* Originally published in Hong Kong, it has since been republished by the Eurasia Publishing House, New Delhi. Professor Priestley is Professor of Education in the University of Hong Kong and a former head of the UNESCO Mission to Laos. He is an M.A. of Oxford and author of several publications.

change in policy as well as emphasis, to which reference will be made at a later stage. As these changes are, however, more in the nature of relaxations from the earlier rigidities, the basic picture remains, broadly speaking, the same.

What are the objectives of the new educational policy in China ? Briefly speaking, there are two distinct, though inter-related, lines of orientation behind the Chinese educational effort. One is political, the other economic. Education is regarded as a major tool of both. Politically, the first priority, of course, is that Communism must be perpetuated. The *Peking Review* in its issue of May 10, 1960, made the forthright declaration :

"We hold the view that education should serve the politics of the proletariat.....We hold the view that education should be combined with productive labour.....We hold the view that education should be directed by the Party on the lines of the masses."

Thus the economic and political aspects of the Chinese educational policy are sought to be fused. Economically, the idea is to create a powerful, industrialised modern China. The main tool for this is to be the productive effort of the masses directed along lines dictated by the Party Organization.

The objectives of Communist education have been further elaborated as follows :

- (i) To make education contribute to the ideological conversion of the Chinese people ; the method employed is intensive Party Control, with intensified teaching of Party beliefs.
- (ii) To make education contribute to the national economy ; the weapon is productive physical labour.
- (iii) To weave education into the life of the masses—in Communist language, to popularise education ; the method is to develop locally within local financial resources at all levels and standards ; to meet all local needs with local abilities.

The ideological content of education and its proper direction provide the keynote to the understanding of the Chinese educational effort. The main task was to eradicate completely all forms of bourgeois thinking. Here the intellectuals presented a difficult problem. The ideological remoulding of this class was a prolonged and complicated struggle. The "mass-line" approach was the method



adopted for this transformation. As Lu Ting-Yi observed : "The cultural revolution means that the masses, workers and peasants become intellectuals and the intellectuals become labouring people". Even such an intellectual pursuit as scientific research was to be confined in the main to what could be described as "mass enquiries". Bearing this in mind, the research effort of the new Republic has been truly prodigious. It is claimed that over 90 per cent. of teachers and students take part in special research work. In 1958, more than 1000 science forums of different kinds were convened at the University level. More than 6400 titles of scientific research works were written. Compared to the preceding eight years, the increase in research output was 6.4 times. Priestley points out, however, that much of the research in fact meant "mass debate and mass study of publications concerning, in the main, the problems of the Communes." In any case, this was the accepted way of bringing about an intellectual revolution with the help of an intellectual proletariat.

The emphasis on, and the importance attached to, manual labour, is an integral part of the Communist educational philosophy. According to Chinese spokesmen, education "can be used like any other means of production and....the educational machine can be switched off and on at need." The *People's Daily* has listed productive physical labour as second only to ideological training among the "triple bastions" of education, the third being scientific research on the basis of mass enquiries. The idea is, as already stated above, to make education contribute to the national economy through productive physical labour. In China, *education is not free, even at the primary stage*, except for scholarship holders. Money for the schools comes mostly from the communes which partly explains the emphasis placed on the productive efforts of the students and the need to place education on a self-supporting basis. In fact, productive labour, mass campaign and Party Youth Organizations provide, as Priestley says, the most instructive part of the curriculum ; it remains, he says, only to teach the child how to read and write.

In this connection, reference must be made to China's "half-work half-study" schools. The idea is something like this : the country needs workers, youth needs education. The "half-work, half-study" schools are designed to give both what they want. As a result of part-time work and part-time study, many schools as



well as students have become either entirely or partly self-supporting. It was in 1958 that a directive was issued to set up these half-work, half-study schools as polytechnics (vocational secondary schools), after the Soviet model, for students within the age-group 13-17. By 1960, 20,000 such schools had been established with an enrolment of over 2 million pupils. Some of these schools reported as much as 20 study hours a week. This kind of schooling is further supplemented by spare-time schools for adult workers, both primary and secondary. Some of these schools impart education of the post-secondary standard. Of the 120 million pupils enrolled in these spare-time schools in 1960, as many as 50,000,000 were in the illiteracy classes. In fact, Peking claims that 87 per cent. of its workers go to the spare-time primary or secondary schools. Needless to say, the factories play a big part in providing such instruction. In Peking, for instance, there were reported to be 126 factories imparting instruction upto the middle-school level and 53 factories that organized spare-time schools up to the higher educational level. It is thus not without reason that Priestley concedes that " Chinese powers of large-scale educational improvisation nowhere show to better advantage than in the sphere of spare-time education".

What exactly is the form of productive work in which the students engage ? In the first place, there are factories and farms connected with the schools where the students work. This, it is said, facilitates the overall arrangement of teaching work for the normalization and systematization of productive labour. Secondly, the students co-operate or sign contracts with factories or people's communes, and take up work in factories or countryside, guided by veteran workers and peasants or by party secretariat as the case may be. Thus something like a rapport is established between the students and teachers on the one hand and the workers and peasants on the other. Finally, the students also participate in social welfare work. Their productive output has not been negligible. It is reported that they have produced over one million tons of iron and several thousands of tons of chemical products and manufactured goods. They have afforested large areas of land, developed handicraft and subsidiary agricultural production. In fact, productive labour has become part of the normal routine of schools and a " must " for the pupils. In the institutions of higher learning also, productive labour has been in-



corporated in the pedagogic plan. The time to be spent by the student on such labour averages 2 to 3 months in the year. Even scientific research has become production-oriented. In fact, research in China does not primarily mean the work of a single gifted individual (or a group of individuals) carried out in his own study or in the sanctum of a library, archives or laboratory, or in a field, for personal investigations. There is an interesting description of the methods of work-oriented training and research in connection with the building of Peking's Miyun Reservoir :

"...the teachers and students went to the work-site to represent the designers and to work as work supervisors and foremen. They joined the 200,000 labourers to put up a courageous fight and converted the work-site into an important class room in which teaching, productive labour and scientific research were carried out in co-ordination. This work method of Tsinghua University has been universally adopted by the different institutions of higher education in Peking."

This is an instance of "mass line" education on which China pins its faith.*

"We hold the view that education should be directed by the Party on the lines of the masses." This is the Party line in a nutshell. In fact, the all-pervasive control of the Party is writ large on every aspect and level of the Chinese educational effort. In fact, this was the line adopted as the overall strategy of the Second Five-Year Plan inaugurating what came to be known as the "Great Leap Forward." It is in this respect that the Communist scheme of education effects a clean break with what the Chinese would call the bourgeois system of education. It is indeed a revolutionary departure from the principles and practice of edu-

*The mass-line theory is applied even in regard to class work and class-room teaching. Its pedagogic interest lies in the fact that it is based on collective work. As the *Kwangming Daily* (Peking) has put it : "Students can be organised into groups, with both good and poor students in each group so that the clever ones can contact to assist their classmates whose studies are not so good. Meanwhile, slogans are raised, such as 'To be a good student by itself is not good enough ; it is only good if the whole group can study well.' To overcome the phenomenon of wide differences in study, lectures and notes are studied collectively, lessons are discussed collectively, chapter by chapter, and paragraph by paragraph ; exercises are done collectively, and these mass' answers far outshine individual answers. (*Peking Kwangming Daily*, 13-6-1959).

cation as understood or followed in the Western countries. There is no doubt that "the Chinese Communist Party is presiding over a revolution in the form and content and spirit of education as great as that in any other department of State enterprise". The governing principle is clear and unambiguous. It is that all educational administrative organs and all educational institutions must be subject to the guidance of the Party Committees. The responsible cadres of these Committees and of the general branch of the Party have to get into touch personally "with every department, every class, and every pedagogical research team ; they should participate in lectures, attend classes and pedagogical researches, take part in organizational work, get at detail, and gain experience."

In this context the Ministry of Education, as such, has practically no direct responsibility for the way in which the educational institutions of present-day China are to be run. The Ministry's main concern lies in compiling text-books, organizing teacher training and, to some extent in controlling certain institutions of higher learning. Even in these respects, its powers are not unfettered. The self-supporting nature of primary and secondary education—absolving the Ministry of a good deal of financial responsibility—is maintained by finance raised locally—by the province, city, farm, factory or commune—through the Party units. The control of the Party over the whole field of school education (and much of higher education) is thus complete and unquestioned. As already mentioned, it extends even to details with the result that no college or school president or principal can evade the Party's guidance. The position of the teaching head of an institution is definitely subordinate to the authority of the Party.

I have already, at the outset, referred to the fact that in recent years there have been some deviation from the earlier rigidities, particularly following the decisions of the Ninth Plenum of the Central Committee held in January, 1961. While Li Fu-Ch'un, Chairman of the State Planning Commission, re-affirmed at the Plenum the confidence of the leadership in the "three-sided red banner", namely, the general line of socialist reconstruction, the "Great Leap Forward" and the commune system (which constituted the most important part of the basic strategy), circumstances forced the leadership to revise the earlier lines in some significant respects, in agriculture,

industry and cultural set-up. According to Professor Schurmann (California University, Berkeley) who, while in Hong Kong, had studied ideology and organisation in Communist China, the changes "reflect a return to centrally co-ordinated planning, orderly industrial management and greater stress on technical rather than political competence".¹⁰ Centralisation is once again becoming the keynote—leadership "from the top down" rather than "from the bottom up." "Political leadership," says Professor Schurmann, "is being de-emphasised in favour of direction by expert." Further emphasis is now on securing a balance and exercising caution in fixing targets rather than on speed and reckless expansion. The idea of achieving rapid production expansion by "group manipulation" appears to be giving way to a policy of inducing greater individual effort by means of material incentives. In the field of agriculture, the realisation has come that the prevailing agricultural crisis could not be solved by increasing the pressure on the peasants but by giving them concessions by way of incentives. This has, to some extent, eroded the earlier theory of excessive egalitarianism and the powers of the commune cadres.

These shifts in policy could not leave the educational base untouched. For example, keen students have detected a shift in the attitude of the Peking regime towards the intellectuals. The "hard line" adopted by the Party towards the intellectuals since 1957 had been actuated by the strong critical attitude displayed by the latter towards the policies of the Party. The reaction of the Party resulting in the hard line was intended to "correct" the individualistic thinking of the intellectuals. The idea of combining education with work-training so that these intellectuals (along with others) instead of "sitting in offices" would join the work camps and become "red and expert" (with increasing emphasis on "red") also came to be adopted as the new Party line. It is difficult to say how far the recent shifts represent an *official* change of policy. All that can be said is that there are to be seen multiplying evidences of a new mood.

¹⁰ See article on "Peking's Recognition of Crisis," originally published in *Current Scene* (Hong Kong), Aug. 15, 1963, and re-published in "Communist China" (New Delhi), pp. 95-115.

Schurmann refers to an article by the Party Secretary of Yunnan University published in *Jen-min Jih-pao* (14-4-61), the Central Party Organ, which, in his view, signifies the abandonment of the work-study policy. "A school is, after all, a school", declared the author of the article, and recommended concentration on technical learning, expressing the view that students should be given more time "to digest" what they have studied and that courses and teaching methods must be improved. Intellectuals, according to Schurmann, are now being increasingly encouraged to express their individual views. There is a renewed emphasis in the Chinese Communist press on the need to cultivate the support of "non-Party" cadres in a bid to win over the intellectuals in order to build up a "United Front". In the words of Schurmann, the whole process may be summed up as follows: "a swing from mass manipulation to a limited range of permissiveness; from decentralization to recentralization of organisation on the national scale, but from centralization to decentralization of authority at the commune level; from exclusive emphasis on the Party as the leader in all things to a greater reliance on expert direction of the economy; from egalitarianism to a policy of differentials and incentives; and, above all, from frantic exuberance to cautious pragmatism."¹¹ But the Professor was writing before the Cultural Revolution that shook China in 1967.

The time for writing a post-script to Chinese experimentation, has, however, not yet arrived. Inspite of the difficulties experienced, the fourth volume of Mao-Tse-Tung's works (published September, 1960) still remains the guide-line of "mass-mobilisation" theory and the organisational methods adopted in pursuance of it. A new wave of a "Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution" has already submerged a large part of the country for which the young Red Guard movement is acting as the spearhead. What is its role *vis-à-vis* the Central Party Leadership is not yet clear. It appears to have replaced the Communist Youth League and the Young Pioneers, imbued with a much greater militant outlook—in fact, so militant that the *People's Daily* had to point out editorially that "the struggle should be conducted by reasoning, not by coercion or force". This militant movement which appears to have derived inspira-

¹¹ *Ibid.* p. 114.



tion from the highest source has involved participation of students on a very large scale. It is just possible that this is one of those periodical outbursts designed to keep Mao-ism alive and kicking ! There is today, in Maoist view, no greater threat to the theoretical foundations of the State than " Revisionism " which Mao has denounced so strongly in the present policy of the USSR. Actually, it appears from certain assessments made by outside experts that the Chinese Communist movement is passing through another phase of contradictions and is marked by an attempt to reconcile the same in the context of what is called " the imperatives of China's objective situation ".¹²

This somewhat brief delineation of the main influences shaping Chinese educational thought and practice is necessary to understand " the imperatives of China's objective situation." It now remains to present a statistical picture of the Chinese educational effort, in its primary and secondary stages.

At the end of 1958, there were 936,000 primary schools in mainland China with an enrolment of 92.61 million pupils (figures later revised to 86 million) which covered 85 per cent. of all school-going children. This was part of the " Great Leap Forward " strategy and represented an increase of 44 per cent. over that of 1957. The age-group covered was 7-12. The problem of accommodating this huge number of students was solved by utilising any office or building or even open spaces for accommodating the schools. Productive labour, mass campaigns and Party Youth Organizations provided " the most instructive part of the curriculum so that it remained only to teach the child how to read and write". The aim throughout is to ensure that the child is well organised, is a good Communist and a good worker. It is stated that 4 out of 5 children above 9 years of age belong to the " Young Pioneers ".

The next higher stage, the Middle Schools, numbered, towards the close of 1958, nearly 200,000. These were inclusive of the Agricultural Middle Schools. The total enrolment in these schools was

¹² See " What is Maoism ?—A Symposium " in " Problems of Communism ", Sept.-Oct., 1966, in which Mr. S. R. Schram (Director of the Soviet and Chinese Section of the Centre for the study of International Relations, Paris, and author of " the Political Thought of Mao Tse-Tung ") and Mr. A. A. Cohen (author of " The Communism of Mao Tse-Tung ", Chicago, 1966) lead a very instructive discussion.



nearly 12 million of whom 1.47 million were in the secondary vocational schools. These latter, including the agricultural schools, have their own small-sized factories, orchards, tea plantations, groves etc. The curriculum included politics, language, mathematics, physics, chemistry (as basic subjects) as well as botany, planting and cultivation techniques.

Reference has already been made to the "half-work half-study" schools. These have been set up in pursuance of the directive issued in 1958. In 1960, there were, as already stated, 20,000 such schools. Shanghai has announced the objective of its spare-time schooling system to be the production of 700,000 technical cadres by 1968. Finally, the all-out character of the Chinese educational effort is shown by the Television Universities established in 1960 in Peking, Shanghai, Canton, Harbin and Shenyang where teaching is done by means of radio, records, film strips and television.

A brief reference may be made in this connection to teacher education in the Republic of China. Peking has 20 Normal Colleges where in-service training is available. In all, there were, in 1958, 33 colleges for teachers' training. Nearly 80 per cent. of the teachers follow special courses in schools by radio and correspondence, to increase their qualifications and prospects of promotion. Apart from the regular teaching staff, others who are drafted to help in teaching include veteran peasants and workers who can show a lot of know-how to children engaged in productive labour, while party secretaries help organise mass campaigns as well as ideological classes for school children. Middle-school graduates are also called upon to take a hand with the three R's.

E. JAPAN

We now intend to conclude this survey (and chapter) with a look at the Japanere system of education. Here, again, there is the story of a clean break with the past, of a clash of new values with ancient tradition.

It was not till the 'fifties of the last century that Japan turned to Western education. Before that she had been following a policy of national seclusion which prevented all access to the gateways of European knowledge. It was in 1872 that Japan promulgated the Education Code accepting, for the first time, the principle of



universal compulsory education at the primary level. It also proposed to establish secondary and higher schools but only for those capable of taking advantage of them irrespective of social or family background. Since then the history of education in Japan has been one of uninterrupted progress, at any rate till the outbreak of World War II. In 1908, the period of compulsory primary (elementary) education was extended from 4 to 6 years. Higher education had meanwhile also received an impetus. The Tokyo Imperial University was established in 1877 followed by the Kyoto and four other Imperial Universities as well as Colleges. The Great Earthquake of 1923 which destroyed almost half of the buildings of the Tokyo Imperial University including its magnificent Library caused a temporary set-back in educational progress. In 1938, on the eve of the War, there were 26,000 elementary schools providing instruction to about 12,000,000 children and 22,000 secondary schools (of various types) catering for 3,500,000 pupils.

Before we proceed to characterize the system of Japanese education as it functioned prior to the outbreak of World War II, it would be useful to make a brief reference to the different stages of the system and the type of education imparted at each of these stages.

Standing apart from the basic or formal Japanese educational system were the institutions of the Kindergarten type. Attendance at these schools was, of course, not compulsory, the total number of pupils attending such schools being of the order of 160,000. Formal education in Japan started with the primary (elementary) schools. The period of schooling was 8 years (age-group 6-14) of which 6 years comprised compulsory training. Education was free at this stage and the schools were co-educational. The education was based on the 3 R's and an acquaintance with the traditional values of Japan with the supreme emphasis on loyalty to the Emperor, the State and the Family.¹³ The secondary stage consisted of the higher primary schools (*Koto Shogakko*) including special secondary schools for vocational training, and the Middle School (*Chu Gakko*). The age

¹³ The Imperial Rescript on Education (1890) has the following words : "..... be filial to your parents....advance the public good and promote common interestsshould emergency arise, offer yourselves courageously to the State, and thus guard and maintain the prosperity of our Imperial Throne, co-eval with heaven and earth."

coverage was 14-19 years. These schools were meant for boys. There were special secondary (high) schools for girls (*Koto Jogakko*). Students had to wear uniforms and had to subject themselves to quasi-military discipline and indoctrination. Attendance, however, was optional. The curriculum included, besides General Education, Mathematics, Natural Sciences, Geography, History and the National Language and Literature. One foreign language—English—was also taught. This heavy syllabus left the student very little time for extra-curricular activities. Then there were the high schools (*Koto Gakko*). These roughly corresponded to U.S. "Junior Colleges" covering 2 years of study of either Literature, Law or Social Science, or Science, Medicine and Engineering. This was followed by 3 years' study in a University (*Dai Gakka*) or in special institutions. All told, the Japanese student took 17 years to get his degree, as against 16 years in U.S.A. and 14 years in India. After completion of college (University) work, a student was awarded the honour of being a *Gakushi* (a learned gentleman) which is equivalent to the bachelor's degree. After completing postgraduate work which takes another 2 to 3 years, on the basis of an accepted thesis, the successful student gets the coveted title of *Hakase* (equivalent to Doctorate). Those who could not go up this educational ladder could join one of the special institutions (*Semmon Gakko*). Some of these schools were higher commercial schools or higher technical schools, while others specialised in mining, agriculture, fine arts, music etc. While women were not normally permitted to enter the regular high schools or Universities, they could enter some of the *semmon gakko*; there was one such institution devoted entirely to the higher education for women.

There were certain peculiar features of the Japanese educational system, as it existed prior to the occupation of Japan by the Allied Powers after her surrender, which arrest our attention.

While in most other Asiatic countries, secondary and higher education are regarded as much more important than primary education, at any rate in the chronological order, the Japanese system had placed greater importance on primary education with its six years of free and compulsory instruction for both boys and girls while secondary education was intended to be meant for the select few. This was a matter of State policy. It was made deliberately

difficult for the general body of students to gain admission to the secondary schools. Most of the students were drawn off to specialised or vocational courses instead of crowding around the regular schools or liberal arts colleges. Even of those who applied for admission to secondary schools only about 60 per cent. were successful. As for admission to colleges and Universities, barely ten per cent. of the applicants from the secondary schools were accepted. One result of this emphasis on primary education has been that Japan has been able to hit a very high target of literacy—99 per cent.—more than that in U.S.A. So far as higher education was concerned, the select few who were admitted to Colleges and Universities mostly opted for law and medicine. The faculty of literature was relatively small and neglected. Commercial and industrial training was found to be more popular even at the secondary stage.

The quasi-military discipline which the boys at the secondary stage had to undergo together with the deification of the State and the Emperor was another significant feature of Japanese education. It is no wonder that the Japanese educational system was characterized by the preponderant role of the State. The State operated almost the whole of the educational system and the purpose was the "practical service of the needs of the State".¹⁴ An overwhelming majority of the schools at all levels were controlled and financed by the State. Private elementary schools were virtually non-existent. Private secondary schools were also few in number and of comparatively little importance. The few that existed depended on religious foundations (Christian or Buddhist). As for the Universities, 25 out of 45 Universities were classed private which scarcely merited the title. From the point of view of employment and prestige, the graduates of the Government Colleges and Universities had a much higher rating than their counterparts from the private institutions. The better class of students (in the Government institutions) tended to go into the civil services or other forms of Government employment. Most of the holders of key positions in the civil service were the alumni of the Tokyo and (to a lesser extent) the Kyoto Universities.

¹⁴ Thus the purpose of the Tokyo Imperial University was stated in its original Charter to be "to teach and investigate those sciences and studies, arts and crafts, which are of practical service of the needs of the State".



One result of this Government domination of the Japanese educational system was the extreme centralisation of State control. Apart from the direct control exercised by the Ministry of Education over the Government institutions, indirect control in the shape of rigid supervision was exercised over the private institutions as well. Even those primary and secondary schools which were partly financed by prefectures or by local governing bodies or by private Corporations were subjected to far-reaching regulations framed by the Ministry of Education. All text books used in the schools had to be approved by the Ministry ; in fact, most of them were compiled by the Ministry itself and their use was made obligatory. This fact tended to encourage learning by rote.

The prestige of the State, and of the Emperor as the symbol incarnate of its authority, which permeated the entire Japanese society had an esoteric appeal. If foreign ideas or techniques were accepted, it was not meant to interfere with the maintenance of what was called *Yamato-damashii*—the soul of Japan. Here was attempted a rich blending, Japanese fashion, of modernism with tradition. The whole of the Japanese system of education, as one writer has pointed out, was based on the principle of indoctrinating all students with the historic code of Japanese ethics with its emphasis on loyalty and obedience to authority. Theoretically, the schools were meant to be secular in the sense that religious (doctrinal) teaching was prohibited in the schools, but State *Shinto* was declared to constitute an ethical code rather than religious and so the attitudes and loyalties associated with State *Shinto* were inculcated in different ways at all levels of education. Every student was expected to be drilled in *Sushkin* (ethics) which in Japanese meant the inculcation of the sense of patriotism and Emperor worship.

Apart from this governing role of Japan's traditional ethics, her educational system bore the stamp of Japanese eclecticism. England, America, France, Germany—all these had contributed to the building up of the mosaic of the Japanese educational pattern. All these were not, however, allowed to cloud the essential values and ideals of Japanese traditional society. As long as the Imperial throne remained inviolate, the West Wind did not cause any sharply unwelcome reactions in the body politic, that is, until the Occupation, after World War II. There were, however, some important changes



during the War. In 1941, the National School Order was issued as the result of which all the elementary schools were re-named National Schools. These schools were organized with six years of Primary Division (age group 6-12) and two years of Higher Division (12-14). It was also planned to extend the period of compulsory education so as to include Grades VII and VIII (Higher Division) but it was not put into effect. In 1943, the Normal Schools (Teachers' Training) were also reorganized. Under the re-organization following the National School Order, apart from the Higher Schools for women (age-group 16 or 17 to 20 or 21) there were Normal Schools offering course A for boys (14-19) and course B for Girls (16/17-19). Besides these, there were also Higher Normal Schools for Boys (17-21). Under the new scheme of re-organisation, all the elementary teacher's training courses were up-graded and brought up to College level. Besides these, there were the "Youth Schools" for both boys (age-group 12/14 to 14) and girls (12-17 or 14-17) which they could join after completing the Primary or the Higher Division. They could also join the Vocational Schools (age group 12-17 or 14-17). Thus students who followed the general line would be attending school in the following order: K.G. (3-6); National Schools : (Primary Division, 6-12), Middle Schools (12-16/17), and Higher Schools (16-19), Colleges (17-20/21/22); and University (19-23) and the Graduate Stages (22/23-26); the total period from the Primary to the College stage covering a period of 17 years.

When, after the Japanese Surrender in 1945, the Supreme Command of the Allied Powers (SCAP) came into occupation of the defeated country, one of its first tasks was to overhaul the entire system of Japanese education so as to rid it of all traces of "ultra-nationalistic and militaristic ideology". The Potsdam Proclamation postulated a drastic change in the national aims of Japan which were also specified in the surrender terms. The Proclamation directed the Japanese Government "to remove all obstacles to the revival and strengthening of democratic tendencies among the Japanese people" and to establish "freedom of speech, of religion and of thought; as well as respect for the fundamental human rights". In the surrender terms, the Japanese Government, on its part, undertook to carry out the provisions of the Proclamation in good faith. The Education Division of the Civil Information and Education Section of

General Headquarters of SCAP were set the two-fold task of removing all militarism and ultra-nationalism from the educational system and the gradual introduction of new educational patterns to ensure the development of schools and the training of the young people and teachers for democratic Japan. It was not the purpose of SCAP to impose its own blue-print. The function of General Headquarters and the Army of Occupation was stated to be "not to govern Japan but to supervise the efforts of the Japanese people to reform themselves and their societies".¹⁵ This, of course, did not preclude direct action by the Supreme Commander, whenever necessary. In fact, broad directives, which had the force of orders, continued to be issued to the Japanese Imperial Government whenever it was judged that Japanese efforts were out of line with, or repugnant to general Occupational policies.

The basic educational policy of the Occupation was communicated to the Japanese Imperial Government in the Directives issued on the 22nd October, 1945. Even before the issue of these Directives, the Ministry of Education, Japan, had moved to stamp out undesirable features of the war-time educational programme which the Imperial Government had adopted. It had issued orders for re-opening schools under the new conditions, and abrogated previous orders on military training. A series of policy statements were issued by the Ministry laying down new educational principles, method of handling text books under the post-war conditions and eliminating militarists from teaching positions. As Japanese text-books were heavily permeated with ultra-nationalistic ideology, a strict application of the new policy would have made short work of almost all the text-books in use and created a vacuum which could not be filled up except by the time-consuming process of writing new text-books. As a matter of immediate policy, therefore, the old text-books were allowed to be retained with necessary deletions in conformity with the instructions of the Ministry as issued from time to time, while, as an interim measure, the Ministry planned the preparation of new text-books. The Occupation authorities had also found that the

¹⁵ *Educational History of New Japan* (1948) (Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, Civil Information and Education Section).



physical education programme during the War had become saturated with military arts. The Ministry, by order, replaced it with programmes of recreation activities. Steps were also taken to establish a number of Committees for "investigation, screening and certification of all present and prospective teachers and educational personnel".¹⁸ This was designed to carry the assurance that teachers thus processed and placed in the teaching professions were better qualified to build the kind of democratic school system that was intended to be established in Japan.

Reference may be made in this connection to the new Constitution of Japan which had been written "to establish the framework for a free, democratic peace-loving society". The Constitution provided for academic and religious freedom, the right of all people to the enjoyment of fundamental human rights to happiness and to express their opinion freely through the press and other means. Religious education as well as religious activities by the State and its organs were, however, forbidden. So far as education was concerned, Article 26 of the Constitution laid down that "all people shall have the right to receive an equal education corresponding to their ability, as provided by law" and that "all people shall be obligated to have all boys and girls under their protection to receive ordinary education provided by law. Such compulsory education shall be free". In fact SCAP was fully aware of the importance of education as an instrument of secular and democratic enlightenment, as well as an antidote to the cult of Shintoism which was banned. The most important step taken up by the Supreme Command in this direction was to invite, in 1946, a Mission of distinguished American educators numbering 27, to advise General Headquarters and the Ministry of Education on the reconstruction of Japanese education. The Mission was in Japan from March 5, 1946, to March 30, 1946. Its recommendations formed the basis of the Fundamental Law of Education which went into effect in 1947 under the auspices of the Educational Reform Council composed of prominent Japanese educationists.

It needs hardly be added that the visit of the U.S. Education Mission marked the beginning of the long-term programme of edu-

¹⁸Imperial Ordinance, May 7, 1946.



cational rehabilitation under the Occupation. The major recommendations of the Mission may be briefly noticed.

One of the basic recommendations of the Mission related to the administrative decentralisation of education. Its view was that the control of the Home Ministry over schools should be removed and that prefectural and local administrative agencies should be elected by popular vote and invested with necessary powers for the approval of schools, licensing of teachers and selection of text-books. The Mission rejected the then existing practice of a course being limited to a single text-book and a teacher's manual and suggested that the courses should be broadened and that instruction should be based on the individual nature and the needs of the students. Before the Mission submitted its report, SCAP had taken certain preliminary steps towards curricular revision. Military features of physical education were eliminated, courses in geography, Japanese history and morals were suspended, and a course in Civic Education was temporarily substituted for the course in Morals. Other recommendations of the Mission provided for the extension of the period of compulsory education to nine years and that tax-supported schools should be co-educational (a sharp break from tradition) and free. The nine years of compulsory education would include six years of elementary and three years of lower secondary schools, to be followed by three years of upper secondary school—altogether a period of twelve years.

As regards higher education, the report of the Mission underlined the necessity for such education to be freed from Government control and laid down that "economic and academic freedom" should be firmly established. Suggestions were also made for better and wider opportunities for promising students to continue their education at higher levels and for the development of library and research facilities. Along with the proposal for the reorganisation of secondary education, recommendations were made for broadening and improving teaching practices and for converting the normal schools into four-year higher institutions so as to provide for adequate professional training combined with liberal education. A characteristically American type of reform proposed was that teachers should be given a salary scale equivalent to that of all other Government officials. They were given the freedom to form professional unions and associations unfettered by Government control. Private institutions



of learning which had hitherto been more or less ignored also earned the right to express their views through these professional organisations.

Another revolutionary change brought about was in the sphere of women's education. We have already noticed how women's education had been given a back-seat in the traditional educational system of Japan. For the first time in her educational history, women's right to equality of treatment with men was fully recognized. The Ordinance which had required separate class rooms for boys and girls from Grade IV upwards was abrogated and plans were perfected for the entry of women to higher schools leading to University. Text-books which had been written in a more simplified form for girls were now to be the same for both boys' and girls' secondary schools. History was further made when the doors of the Imperial Universities, hitherto a male preserve, were thrown open to women. Women also began to be appointed to positions of responsibility in the educational world.

We may now turn to the new picture of secondary education in Japan as it has emerged since its occupation. The American Education Mission in its report proposed that "a new philosophy, a new procedure and a new structure" be adopted for the schools of Japan. As already noticed, a three-tier system, with a total duration of 12 years including 6 years of elementary, 3 years of lower secondary and 3 years of upper secondary schools, was adopted. As this integrated system of education was not merely the result of reorganisation but rather a radical transformation, a great deal of spade work had to be done by way of curricular revision, preparation of text-books and teaching materials appropriate to each grade, sharper definition of objectives, elimination of ultra-nationalistic, militarist or reactionary features, introduction of common school systems for both boys and girls, and the like. Taking the lower secondary schools as the starting point,¹⁷ the principal aims of this stage of education were stated, according to official sources, as follows : to develop individuality and to train pupils

¹⁷ The lower Secondary Schools were legally organised in April, 1947, and the Upper Secondary Schools in April, 1948.

to participate effectively in group life and activities, to accomplish more fully the objectives of elementary education, to promote social activities in and out of schools, to guide "sentiments" rightly, to develop the basic knowledge and skills necessary in vocations and to inculcate respect for labour. The upper secondary schools which would complete secondary education would comprise the following objectives : to cultivate the qualities necessary to become effective members of the group and the nation, to provide further education on the same basis as that provided by the lower secondary school, to guide students in deciding their future careers according to their individualities, to cultivate higher general culture and arts, to cultivate breadth and depth of understanding and ability to exercise sound judgment on social problems and to achieve the fullest possible development and enrichment of their individualities.¹⁵

The lower secondary stage, it was decided, should terminate with Grade IX, the upper secondary covering Grades X-XII. It was originally proposed to make attendance at school compulsory up to the end of the school year in which the student attained the age of 15. This requirement was to be fulfilled gradually. During 1947-48, compulsory attendance was required up to Grade VII. Extension of compulsory attendance through Grades VIII and IX would depend upon economic conditions and availability of teachers. As for the higher secondary stage, it may be recalled that under the previous (Imperial) regime secondary and higher education was meant for the fortunate few. Naturally the number of secondary schools was few and the Occupation authorities required time to increase the number of such schools up to the point when they would be able to receive all pupils who might desire to continue schooling beyond Grade IX. The Ministry of Education would see that upper secondary schools were planned on the basis of school population surveys, each prefecture being divided into appropriate secondary school districts. Education would, it was expected, be free. Co-education would be encouraged but would not be mandatory. In special cases, a community might add special courses or post-graduate courses. For example, it might be felt necessary to provide

¹⁵ *Educational History of New Japan* (1948), SCAP, Chap. XI.

technical education beyond the twelfth grade. Anyway students would enter Universities after completion of the University preparatory course. Another significant feature of the re-organized secondary system of education in Japan was the elimination of the youth schools and its common and preparatory course as from the 1st April, 1947. These were replaced by a new type of part-time schools on the secondary level. Commencing on the 1st April, 1948, these part-time schools were given the power to admit pupils who had completed the ninth grade of the new lower secondary schools. Eventually these part-time upper secondary schools were designed to offer the same curriculum as the full-time schools but the education would be so arranged that pupils were allowed a longer time in which to complete the course. There would be no differences as to the qualifications required of the teachers in these two types of schools and they would enjoy equality of status.

The programme of studies of the two secondary courses—lower and upper—may now be briefly discussed. Social Studies was continued after the elementary stage right up to three years of the lower secondary stage. Japanese history was retained as a separate social study course. There were other required subjects which, between them, would consume 30 out of 34 hours per week available to all students. The remaining 4 hours provided the period for "free study", which could be utilised also for learning a foreign language or an additional vocational subject. Individual schools might offer as many different vocational subjects as they might desire, each school being encouraged to offer a minimum number to enable each student to spend 7 hours in vocational training. As regards the upper secondary schools, a choice of courses was allowed at this stage. Previously, the old Middle School courses were essentially designed to prepare the students for the higher schools but more or less failed to serve the interests of those who would go directly into some occupation immediately after leaving school. Many of the new upper secondary schools would now be multi-purpose, with a diversified curriculum, and with a number of optional courses that would qualify a pupil to enter a University or a vocation. The curricular programme of the new schools would thus be flexible enough to provide for the varied needs and interests of the students. So far as the University Preparatory Course was concerned, the curriculum included the National Language

(15 Units), Social Studies including History of the West, History of the Orient and General Social Studies (15 Units), Mathematics (10 Units), Laboratory Science (Physics and Chemistry) (10 Units), Physical Education (9 Units) and free Electives (16 Units). The following programme was recommended for the Vocational Course : Vocational Subjects (25 Units), National Language (9 Units), Social Studies (10 Units), Physical Education (9 Units), Science (5 Units), Mathematics (5 Units) and free Electives (22 Units). In either case the number of permissible Units totalled up to 85.

It is to be noticed, in conclusion, that all these changes were decided upon after prolonged conferences between the Educational Consultants of SCAP, the Ministry of Education, Principals and Teachers, as well as Prefectural Education Officers. Local teachers and officials showed great eagerness in understanding the work of the new "teacher-consultants" as contrasted with the former inspectors. As regards vocational education, while it was, under the previous regime, largely unplanned, that is, without due regard to the needs of the students or to the labour market requirements, the representatives of SCAP set about planning this type of education in a systematic manner. Action was initiated in October, 1946, towards the establishment of an advisory group for vocational education. This was set up in December of the same year with the co-operation of leaders of business, industry, labour and education. As a result of these efforts, diversified courses have been instituted in a secondary schools as well as higher technical schools. The former offered courses useful for industry as well as for agriculture. The industrial group included electrical communication, industrial chemistry, metal chemistry, metal industrial arts, wood industrial arts, machine shop, metallurgy, textiles, dyeing, building, structural work, mining, ship-building etc., while the agricultural group included general agriculture, agricultural construction, agricultural production, horticulture, forestry, sericulture, stockraising, gardening, fisheries, home economics etc. The higher technical schools also offered courses in agriculture and industry as well as in commerce and Public Service. Agriculture included hydrophonics, land reclamation, soil chemistry, agricultural economics and poultry raising while industry included building construction, ceramics, coal mining technology, factory management, architectural drafting and industrial



chemistry. The Commerce group of subjects included accountancy, advertising, insurance, personnel management, secretarial work and foreign trade. Public Service included crime detection, community planning, sanitation, fire prevention and control and city management. There was also a group of courses in fisheries such as fish culture, marine products, navigation and marine engines. For women, special courses were offered in dress designing, cosmetology, social service work, nursing, medical laboratory technique. In addition to these courses, new vocational programmes are now being worked out in specialised vocational schools with the assistance of a Special Committee of Vocational School Consultants (established in October, 1947).

The foregoing discussion of the educational system of a few selected countries is admittedly not meant to be exhaustive. The main purpose has been to discover the leading ideas of educational reconstruction underlying these systems in order to bring our own efforts to a comparable focus. Only the highlights could be indicated ; the details would exceed the limits of the space which I could allow myself. Further, education is a dynamic process as much as it is a product of history. Changes are taking place even as these lines are being written. At the same time there are certain basic values that, throughout the ages, have provided the motive power of, and sustained, human progress all over the world, in the field of humanities as well as in science and technology. The aim has been not only to cater to the manifold needs of the human personality but to enrich the human heritage. To this human heritage, the different national systems of education have made vital contributions. The educational system of India is now to be studied in this larger context, if her historical role is to be properly interpreted and fulfilled.



CHAPTER XII

SECONDARY EDUCATION IN INDIA

I

Preliminary

The survey of educational systems presented in the previous chapter discloses a great variety in regard to most of the major points that concern secondary education, such as the total duration of the course, the aims and objectives of the course, syllabi and course contents, its relation to elementary education on the one hand and post-secondary education on the other as well as the special fields into which it is divided. Besides these, there are aspects or features peculiar to the different national systems suited to the needs and requirements considered relevant by the respective authorities. In her attempts to strike out a new path, India will naturally have to pronounce upon the validity of some of the distinguishing features of the secondary systems of the other countries in deciding upon the extent to which they could be assimilated to the Indian scheme.

Our problem is two-fold. On the one side we have an educational system which, at the outset, we got as a legacy from our erstwhile British rulers. To be sure, it has been modified from time to time in response to the needs felt at different periods for a change. The overall picture, however, is that of a general conformity with the British pattern, subject, of course, to important deviations dictated by local circumstances and compulsions. The other problem is that of re-defining the objectives behind the programmes of educational reconstruction that would be consistent with the general perspectives of our National Plans, and with the historical role that a free India is to play in the modern world. The immediate task of such reconstruction would be to make a re-assessment of the educational system in the light of our national needs. As an immediate experiment, the system should be re-examined in the light of our man-power



requirements and the need for the fullest development and use of our rich human resources. This does not, of course, mean that we had or have no use for the liberal or humanistic tradition in education or that we propose to find satisfaction in being a nation of technicians and mechanics. But it is based on the acknowledgment that there are great deficiencies in the supply of technical skill of which we are in urgent need and which our educational system has so far failed adequately to provide. It is a matter of priorities, and not a question of ignoring the basic values of life.

Apart from the necessity of re-defining the goal and the objectives of our secondary education system, there is the equally pressing problem of standards. Whether our children are studying the Classics or History or Philosophy or Economics, or whether they are studying the Natural or Experimental Sciences, or taking a course in Technology, any tendency towards a possible lowering of standards in order to provide for the largest possible output in the shortest possible time has to be critically viewed in the ultimate interests of the Nation. There has been widespread complaint in recent years about the deteriorating quality of Indian education. Without entering into a controversy, our people will certainly be justified in demanding a substantial improvement in the quality of the education that they expect for their children. At a time when the educational authorities in India are engaged in the search for new educational values, the importance of an immediate re-examination of the standards of education cannot be over-emphasised. A pointer in this direction is the reported observation made by Dr. Kothari, Chairman of the University Grants Commission as well as of the Education Commission (1964-1966), that our aim should be that, by 1976, that is, by the end of the Fifth Five-Year Plan, the standard to be reached at the end of the secondary stage should be equivalent to the present Intermediate and that the standard to be reached at the end of the First Degree Stage should be approximately equal to that of the Master's Degree. It is, of course, assumed that in formulating these objectives the educational authorities, both at the University and at the secondary education levels, teachers, guardians and students, and, of course, the national Government, would readily co-operate in the joint effort to raise educational standards. On the other hand, the capacity of our students to assimilate any sudden improve-



ment of standards should not be over-rated. It should not be underrated either. What is necessary is that there should be an intelligent appreciation of the need for a large expansion of educational opportunities and facilities that might help our students to overcome their present aversion, relatively speaking, to strenuous intellectual effort.

Before we proceed to a detailed examination of the implications of the educational experiments on which we are now engaged, it would be useful if we turn for a while to the history of the evolution of our secondary education system for a better understanding of our future programme of action.

II

Historical Highlights

The first concern of the East India Company during the early days of its regime was not to interfere with the indigenous institutions and culture of this country. It is on record that the first institution to impart secondary education of the modern type in India was started in Bengal in 1817, not by the Government, but through private efforts. Rammohun Roy, David Hare, Radhakanto Dev and some other leading Indians took the initiative in establishing an institution where Western learning was to be imparted by teachers trained in European culture. This institution gradually grew into the Hindu College, later on the Presidency College. This was possible because of the devoted zeal of a band of pioneers who were faced with Government reluctance to embark on educational experiments on the one hand and considerable local opposition from the orthodox circles, on the other. As Alexander Duff said in his evidence before the Parliamentary Committee of 1853, "English education was in a manner forced upon the British Government; it did not itself spontaneously originate it". This hesitation on the part of a foreign government to force upon the natives their own (English) system of education and culture was to be understood in the context of circumstances prevailing at the time and the policy of the British government at Home of not interfering with indigenous institutions and culture. We know how bitterly and at what great cost to himself Rammohun fought for the abolition



of the *Sati*. Understood in this way, it does not appear to be altogether an unintelligible fact in the history of English education in India, as Arthur Howell suggested, that while the natives of India were demanding instruction in European literature and science, a body of English gentlemen appointed to initiate a system of education for the country was found to insist upon the retention of oriental learning to the practical exclusion of European learning.

It was almost after a decade of controversy that Government was ultimately led to take a firm decision. This came in the form of a Resolution of the Governor-General-in-Council passed at the instance of Macaulay, dated the 7th March, 1835. As the historian Trevelyan has put it, "Macaulay having embellished the literature of Europe came to its aid when it was trembling in the scale with the literature of Asia". The Resolution referred to stated : "*His Lordship-in-Council is of opinion that the great object of the British Government ought to be the promotion of European literature and science amongst the natives of India and that all the funds appropriated for the purposes of education would be best employed on English education alone.*" The funds thus employed would be spent on " imparting to the native population a knowledge of English literature and science *through the medium of the English language*".

It was thus that English language cast its shadow on Indian soil. Later on, because of the persistent opposition of a group of Indians, both Hindu and Muslim, who had been protesting against the "ultra-Anglicism" of the Resolution of March 7, 1935, the cultivation of Sanskrit and Arabic was allowed to continue under Government auspices. There were also Englishmen—William Adam, one of the most distinguished among them—who had pointed out the utter impracticability of using English as the *only* medium of conveying knowledge to the general mass of the people. William Adam had been appointed in January, 1835, to survey the state of vernacular education in Bengal. He conducted a painstaking survey spread over three years and submitted his findings in a series of reports between July 1, 1835, and April 28, 1938. These reports are still regarded as almost classic, though they failed to alter the Government's policy. The new policy, once announced, had come to stay.

It was natural that as a result of the new policy of providing State aid and supervision to schools teaching English, such schools



would multiply quickly. In Bengal, their number trebled in the next five years. The General Committee of Public Instruction proposed in April, 1835, "that schools for the teaching of English literature and science through the medium of the English language be established in the principal towns under the Presidencies of Fort William and Agra as funds for that purpose become available and as school masters can be procured". Accordingly, six new seminaries were established, commencing with the cities of Patna and Dacca and another six were established in the beginning of 1836. In the period between 1835 and 1854, the Government set about establishing schools at the district headquarters. These were known as "zilla schools". Practically all the funds allotted to education were, during this period, spent on schools and colleges founded and controlled by the Government. It is to be added, however, that the establishment of schools was not left to the Government alone. Private agencies, including Christian Missionaries, English and other, came forward to help in the dissemination of Western learning by establishing schools and colleges. As already pointed out, the responsibility of the Government in establishing and maintaining educational institutions came to an end with the famous Educational Despatch of Sir Charles Wood (1854). Two of its most important recommendations dealt with the creation of Universities and the institution of a system of "grants-in-aid" for schools. In the field of secondary education, the policy of the Government was defined to be one of gradual withdrawal.

The demand for English education had by now been agitating the minds of the intelligentsia, particularly in Bengal. Local initiative and the financial support provided by grants-in-aid were responsible for a striking increase in the number of "high schools", that is, secondary ten-class schools. While, in 1855, there were only 47 English schools in the whole of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, the figure had gone up to 209 by 1882. One interesting feature of the situation was that though in Wood's Despatch of 1854, the policy had been laid down that the Government would gradually withdraw from the field of secondary education, yet the Government did not, in fact, do so. Not only was the Government spending comparatively more on secondary education in the shape of grants-in-aid—96 out of 156 high schools under private management were receiving grants-in-aid in 1882—



there was a large number of secondary schools which continued to be directly under Government control. It was in this way that a dual system of secondary education developed, one group of high schools under Government control and management and the other under local (private) management. This was also reflected in the quality of control vesting in the University which "recognised" the schools and in the Department of Public Instruction of the Provincial Government so far as Government schools were concerned. However, with the new policy of greater reliance on private initiative for establishing high schools, secondary education, particularly in Bengal, came to be predominantly a product of non-official enterprise. By 1902, the total number of secondary schools, including Middle English Schools (many of which aspired to become high schools and, in fact, became so in course of time) had increased to 1481 while the number of pupils went up to nearly 250,000. Of these schools only 54 were under Government management and 35 under the management of local bodies ; the rest were privately managed. More than one-third of the private institutions were not even in receipt of any grant-in-aid, not because the schools were affluent but because the Government lacked the funds to make grants to all these schools ; perhaps, some of them were not considered fit to receive grants. This admixture of private management and State control was laid down as a policy in a Government Resolution of 1904 which was re-affirmed in a Resolution in 1913. The grant-in-aid rules were, however, made more elastic. By 1917, the year in which the Calcutta University Commission (the Sadler Commission) was appointed, the number of high schools also had increased to more than seven hundred.

III

The Sadler Commission

Though the Calcutta University (Sadler) Commission was appointed principally "to enquire into the working of the Calcutta University", it was given the power to make recommendations, as "may appear desirable", with regard to the organisation of secondary

education in Bengal. The most important recommendation made by the Commission in the field of secondary education was the establishment of a Board of Secondary and Intermediate Education. The Commission recorded the opinion that "no satisfactory reorganization of the University System of Bengal will be possible unless and until a radical reorganization of the system of secondary education upon which University work depends, is carried into effect". The Commission thought that a radical reform was necessary not only in the interest of the University but also for national progress in Bengal.

Though the Commission had recommended the creation of a Board of Secondary and Intermediate Education, it was later on agreed to between the University and the Government of Bengal that Intermediate classes should not be disturbed for the present and that they would continue to be under the control of the University. The Board was to be given the power of formulating the various curricula to be followed in the high schools, to conduct the examinations, to grant formal recognition to high schools (and intermediate colleges) and to advise the Government. It was further proposed that the Board should have its own Inspectorate with substantial executive powers, especially in regard to the distribution of grants to schools and the exercise of control over such high schools (and also intermediate colleges) as might be maintained out of public funds. All this would be in replacement of the dual control that was being exercised by the University and the Government over the high school system.

It is interesting to recall in this connection that the Commission placed on record their appreciation of the spirit of self-sacrifice and love of learning of our students. They also found that many students could not proceed to school because of poverty. They recognised that secondary education stood in need of great expansion but that no improvement was possible unless the existing schools were put on a sound basis. One difficulty in this direction was the dearth of qualified teachers. Due to the low pay-scales it was not possible to attract properly qualified persons to the teaching profession. The result was that those who joined the profession were mostly untrained and not quite suitable for teaching work. It was evident that any substantial improvement in the situation would require



substantial investment. The Commission thought that it would require an annual expenditure of Rs. 40 lakhs.

The Commission's thinking on the structural pattern of secondary education proposed by them requires special attention. The main reason why the Commission wanted to take out the control of secondary education from the hands of the Calcutta University was that the purpose of secondary education was not merely to prepare the students for entering the University and that it would not be fair to let the University have an exclusive say over secondary education in this State. On the other side, the Commission took care to make the Board autonomous and free from Government control as far as possible. Provision was made for a non-official majority in the membership of the proposed Board. Both the public and the University were to be represented. To some extent the principle of communal representation was conceded in the constitution of the Board, but it was kept within limits.¹

The proposal to transfer from the University the intermediate classes to the Board was an important innovation proposed by the Board. The proposal was significant because of two reasons. First, the two-year intermediate classes were considered to be a virtual extension of secondary education. Secondly, due to the proposal for the inclusion of the Intermediate classes within the ambit of secondary education, the duration of such education was to be extended from ten to twelve years but, strangely enough, these last two years (that is the intermediate classes) were to be incorporated in separate Intermediate Colleges or attached to the existing 10-class schools which were to be placed under the Board. It has already been stated that this part of the Commission's recommendation was not acceptable to the Calcutta University. In fact, for various reasons, the reforms suggested by the Commission fell through so far as the Calcutta University was concerned, but there was no doubt that their proposals had made a strong impact on educational thinking in our country. Thus, when the University

¹Of the 16 members of the Board, 3 were to be Hindus and 3 Muslims but no separate electorates were proposed for them. Necessary provision was made for Government control, but not too much of it in order that the autonomy of the Board might not be unduly restricted. The need for non-official co-operation was stressed.



of Dacca was established in 1921, a Board of Secondary and Intermediate Education was also established to which the secondary schools as well as the intermediate classes of the existing Colleges within the City area were transferred. At the same time the degree classes of the existing Colleges in the Dacca City were transferred to the University so that the erstwhile degree Colleges, shorn of their degree classes, were reduced to the status of Intermediate Colleges. Dacca was also among the first to introduce the Three-Year Degree Course in a modified form. One result of the non-acceptance by the Calcutta University of the recommendations of the Sadler Commission was that the problems relating to the training of teachers as well as their salaries and conditions of service were left unsolved. Also, there was a significant failure to provide for a diversification of courses at the secondary stage. The result was that the academic type of secondary schools leading up to the Matriculation Examination continued to dominate the field.

Nevertheless, the period following the report of the Sadler Commission witnessed a considerable expansion of secondary education in the country. Schools sprang up both in rural and urban areas as evidence of a new re-awakening of interest in academic learning among our countrymen. Most of these schools were privately financed ; this meant that many of them were poorly equipped and led a hand-to-mouth existence. In the Calcutta University, post-graduate classes had meanwhile been centralised and new avenues of scientific research were opened up through the munificence of two of the greatest patrons of learning in this part of the country, Taraknath Palit and Rashbehary Ghose. New Universities were also established in other parts of India, as many as eight new Universities being established during the ten years 1920-1930. It is also pertinent to note that the Sadler Commission was the first authoritative team to recommend full-time salaried Vice-Chancellors for our Universities. The main point to note, however, is the fact that, following the Sadler Commission's report, educational activity received a great impetus ; this gave rise to a fresh need of re-examining the entire situation concerning the educational system that had been growing up and expanding without proper thought or planning. The appointment of the Indian Statutory (Simon) Commission in 1928 provided the opportunity for a fresh probe.



The question was taken up by a Committee presided over by Dr. P. J. Hartog in 1929. This Committee which functioned as an "auxiliary" of the Indian Statutory (Simon) Commission was asked to review the position of education in India. The Committee found that the Matriculation Examination of the University still dominated the whole field of secondary education which was considered to be an undesirable feature of the system and which it proposed to remedy by recommending a diversion of courses at the Middle School stage. While proposing that there should be "more diversified curricula" at the secondary stage, the Committee had realised, even at that early stage, the necessity of "diversion of more boys to industrial and commercial careers at the end of the middle stage, preparatory to special instruction in technical and industrial schools". The question of providing greater facilities for technical and vocational education will receive our attention in Chapter XVII. Here we are concerned with the general structure of the secondary education system.

While on the subject, a brief notice may be taken of two other reports of educational interest, namely, that of the Sapru Committee and the Abbot-Wood Report. The Sapru Committee was appointed in 1934 by the Government of the United Provinces (now Uttar Pradesh) to enquire into the causes of unemployment in that Province. Needless to say, the Committee was critical of the prevailing system of education which did not specifically prepare students for a gainful career, for an avocation in life. As a corrective to his situation, the Committee wrote : "in a situation like this, the real remedy is to provide diversified courses of study at the secondary stage and to make that stage more practical and complete in itself and more closely related to the vocational requirements of different types of students. At the secondary stage, side by side with the general course leading to the University, there should be parallel courses offering instruction in technical, commercial, industrial and other vocational subjects." The recommendations of the Committee are particularly relevant because of the structural pattern suggested by it. In the first place, the Committee recommended diversified courses of study at the secondary stage, one of which would lead to the University degree. We thus find that the idea of parallel "streams" of study was first mooted by this Committee. Another change in

the structural pattern which has also been subsequently accepted related to the abolition of the Intermediate stage and the extension of the secondary stage by one year, converting the High Schools into eleven-class schools. Of these eleven years, the secondary stage was to consist of six years to be divided into two stages—the higher and the lower—each covering a period of three years. Thus assuming the age of entry to the primary course to be six, there would be two age-breaks, one at the age of nine and the other at the age of twelve. Option for the respective "streams" would arise at the second age-break, which would mark the end of the lower secondary stage. Students taking up the general course, Arts, Science or Commerce, would join the University, for a three-year Degree Course. It is to be seen that all these major recommendations have since been, by and large, incorporated into the secondary education system of West Bengal and most of the other States in India.

The growing interest in technical and vocational education was further evinced by the appointment, two years later, of two expert advisers, Messrs. Abbot and Wood, to advise the Government of India on problems of educational reorganization, and particularly on problems of vocational education. The need for a fresh review was underscored by the fact that a large number of University graduates were finding it increasingly difficult to secure employment of a kind suitable to their qualifications. It is interesting to observe in this context that Messrs. Abbot and Wood had recommended the establishment of "a complete hierarchy of vocational institutions parallel with the hierarchy of institutions imparting general education". One important result of their recommendations was that a new type of technical institution known as "Polytechnic" came into existence. These Polytechnics, however, showed considerable variations in different parts of the country as regards the type of vocations in which training was to be imparted and the duration of the courses. The recommendations regarding the institution of diversified courses have also been accepted in several States, both at the middle school stage and at the end of the high school course. These courses included, besides courses in general knowledge, agriculture, technology, art and craft training, secretarial practice and domestic science.

*From Sargent to Mudaliar*

In a sense it might be stated that the recommendations made by the previous Commissions and Committees were in the nature of occasional probes some of which, no doubt yielded results that set the subsequent pattern of secondary education in many of the States in India. The most outstanding contribution to the current discussions about the future pattern of secondary education in India was that by the Central Advisory Board of Education in 1944. In that year the C.A.B. submitted a comprehensive report on post-war educational development in India. The report covered the entire system of secondary education in India. It was prepared by Sir John Sargent, then Educational Adviser to the Government of India and was almost like a project report with a detailed model of secondary education designed at the same time to spell out the future structure of secondary education in this country. Considering the circumstances of the time it was a clearly ambitious report, and like all ambitious reports, and in spite of the wide attention it received, it was ultimately shelved.

Some of the highlights of the proposals contained in the Sargent Report may, however, be noticed. In the first place, the Report divided school education into two sectors—"free" and "fee-paying". This, incidentally, followed British practice. So far as post-primary education was concerned, the Report proposed free schooling up to the Senior Basic standard for students of the age-group 12 to 14 for three years followed by the fee-paying High School for the age-group 12 to 17 meant chiefly for students of well-to-do classes. The main point of the Board's proposals appears to be based on a differentiation between the Senior Basic stage, that is what may be called the Middle School stage, and the High School stage. The idea was that students, after completing the Senior Basic stage, would go to the technical or vocational institutions. Students belonging to this stage would not be encouraged to pass on to the High School. On the other hand, entry into the higher technical and professional institutions would be open only to the products of the proposed High Schools. It is

not clear whether students passing out of the Junior Technical High Schools would also qualify for admission to the (Higher) Technical High Schools. One interesting proposal of the Sargent Report was to limit the size of the classes to 20, 25 and 20 students per class for the Junior Basic, Senior Basic and the High Schools. It is evident that the financial side of the Board's proposals was going to be very heavy. For instance, if the pre-Primary, Primary and Senior Basic Schools, which were meant to be free under the Board's proposals are considered, the total cost of these stages for the whole of British India would have amounted to Rupees 232 crores ; these would have catered for 5,20 lakhs of students. The High Schools in which the estimated enrolment was 72 lakhs would have cost Rupees 50 crores.

Apart from the high cost involved, the proposal of the Board that evoked strong criticism was the setting up of two parallel systems of secondary education, one free (from Primary to the Senior Basic stage) and the other fee-paying (Senior Basic to High School). This, as already noted, was patterned more or less on the English system of education. The English system places the higher elementary schools and the secondary schools in two parallel divisions. But in England provision has been made for the conversion of Junior Technical type of schools into the Technical High Schools. As regards parallel systems of education, the Spens Report (1939) actually considered it obsolete. In fact, the Report expressed the view that the courses of study in all schools between the ages 11 and 13 should not differ to any marked extent. It also considered that " parity of status for all forms of Secondary Education will make it easier to transfer pupils to schools better suited to their needs and that without creating any sense of slur or failure " at the end of the second year. The Hadow Report on the " Education of the Adolescent " (1926), while pointing out that Elementary and Secondary Education (in England) were still normally regarded as distinct and separate systems, considered it as " inappropriate and indeed positively misleading, now that the tendency of educational development is more and more to emphasise that they must be regarded as successive phases in a continuous process through which all normal children ought to pass." I have already stated in the chapter on Primary Education that almost all the educational systems of the world, and that in England



particularly, permit a certain amount of over-lapping of the different stages, due to historical reasons. While the critics questioned the wisdom of the proposal of the C.A.B. to introduce parallel systems of education in India, the attempt to copy the Public School system of England was specially condemned. During the British era, the rulers of the Indian States used to educate their children in exclusive schools. There were certain reasons for the existence of these schools ; the Indian Princes formed a class apart and British Imperial interests dictated the kind of education that the young Princes were to receive. Naturally the general public had little to do with this kind of academic exclusiveness and looked with extreme suspicion on any attempt to introduce any type of education meant exclusively for the children of rich and well-to-do classes. The recent craze for establishing schools in India on the Public School model for the benefit of the affluent sections of our country is a development that has understandably evoked hostile feelings. It would do once again re-examine the issues involved.

Clearly it should not be the purpose of our educational system to equate quality with snobbery. We know that the good is the enemy of the better and if the Public School system is designed to offer a better type of education, it would not be right to resist it merely because it is expensive. After all quality cannot be had cheap, and education is not a bazaar commodity. What is objectionable is that non-academic differentia should determine the class of students to be admitted or that the question of cost should deter our promising boys from joining it simply because of their financial status. In an egalitarian society a further argument is heard that such exclusive schools breed a sort of class-consciousness, a sort of stand-offish attitude or arrogant superciliousness and are, therefore, inconsistent with India's role as a socialist country. As an educationist I would suggest that we should encourage better education in whatever form we find it provided that such education is available to all who might benefit by it irrespective of their financial or social status. The main point is whether we are convinced of the utility of such schools. It used to be said that the Battle of Waterloo was won on the fields of Eton. If it is meant purely as a picturesque aphorism, we could as well say that our victory in the national struggle against the British was won in the huts and hovels of India. An

educational experiment should be examined primarily from the pedagogic point of view. We have to judge our public schools principally from that point of view. Since, however, education has a social context, it is our concern to see that by encouraging a particular system we do not produce social misfits. In England, 85 per cent. of students who study free in the Junior schools continue their education in the Elementary school (Senior, Central or Modern) while a small number of them enter the more expensive sector of secondary education by selection along with the products of the Public Schools. Special places and allowances are offered to poor and meritorious pupils to maintain themselves in the secondary schools while others enter as paying students. These latter mostly come through the expensive and exclusive Preparatory and Private Schools (that is, Public Schools). It is stated that the education given in these Preparatory Schools is completely dominated by the Scholarship and Entrance examinations of the great Public Schools. These schools tended at one time to become mainly cramming institutions for the simple fact that the main purpose of the students was to pass the common entrance examination at all costs. While a scholarship system is intended to correct family prestige, in practice it follows it too closely, "giving too freely to him that hath". Records show that the expensive type of schools, public and private, used to obtain about 75 per cent. of all college entrance scholarships at Oxford and at Cambridge.

These facts are to be borne in mind in deciding the following questions, namely, (1) do we have use for any schools of the type of Public Schools in India ? and (2) how should we integrate these schools with the general stream of education ?

It would be useful in this connection to refer to the views expressed by the Mudaliar Commission on Public Schools. Other matters discussed in this valuable report will be taken up in the next section. After pointing out that the majority of the Public Schools in India were of comparatively recent origin—there were, at the time when the Commission wrote, 14 such schools recognised by the Public School Conference—the Commission referred to the differences of opinion on the subject amongst those whom they had interviewed, and stated that some of these views were "extreme". This critical attitude towards the Public School system was dictated by the following reasons, namely, that (1) a Public School in a modern democracy

is an anachronism ; (2) it has not made any material contribution to the educational progress of the country ; (3) it has tended to produce a type of narrow-minded snobs ; and that (4) these schools are expensive and will serve only the rich and thus perpetuate a class feeling not suited to the new democratic set-up of the country. On the other side the Commission quotes John Sargent as saying that " the product of the Public School may be limited in its intellectual range, narrow in its sympathies and arrogant in its assumptions but at the same time it displays a capacity to set up and abide by standards of conduct and a readiness to accept responsibility, qualities which must form an essential part of the equipment of any real public servant". In reply the Mudaliar Commission referred to the fact that during the last world war, it was clearly demonstrated that the leaders for the armed forces were found from amongst candidates trained in a variety of schools. They, therefore, suggested that some of the good principles and methods followed in Public Schools should be gradually encouraged in all sectors. They recorded the fact that there are greater opportunities in these schools than in the majority of secondary schools for developing certain essential traits of character, including the qualities of leadership, because of the special facilities that they can offer and the close contact between teachers and pupils that is possible in them, and expressed the opinion that if the Public Schools are properly organised and training is given on right lines, they can help to develop correct attitudes and behaviour and enable their students to become useful citizens. The Commission suggested that the Public Schools should not be a special or exclusive institution but must have its roots in the soil of the country and must generally conform to the normal pattern of national education. The Commission also suggested that these schools should place due stress not only on the spirit of sportsmanship but also on all other important aspects of citizenship, for dignity of labour and a social sense ; and, finally that they " should also take care to see that their general educational life is in conformity with Indian culture, traditions and outlook".

It is to be decided if, in view of these recommendations, the Public School, in the altered set-up, will remain a Public School. Most of them now prepare candidates for the Senior Cambridge Examinations or their local counterpart, the Indian School Leaving Certificate

Examination. There is a good deal of difference in the syllabi of studies followed by these schools and those prescribed for the regular Secondary or Higher Secondary Examinations in India. Apart from the differences in curricular offerings, there is a special system of marking and grading at the former examinations which give rise to difficult problems of equivalence and adjustment. In spite of these difficulties, it is academically not very sound to have two parallel systems of general education with little contact between them, and with consequent problems of adjustment at the University stage. The Mudaliar Commission would allow them a transitional period of 5 years during which they must become self-supporting, without having to depend on assistance from public funds ; otherwise they should close down. I am afraid, the Commission is caught between two stools. If it is satisfied that these schools perform a useful function in producing a type of students for whom we have need, it should indeed recommend an increase of State assistance rather than withdraw it, and the schools should be allowed to function as exemplars in their own special field, subject to any regulations that they may be required to comply with in the national interest. These schools are bound to be costly and public support, on the scale that they require to maintain themselves in a state of efficiency according to their own standards, may not be forthcoming in the altered political situation of to-day. But what if they do not make any call on the public exchequer ? We know that the aim of our education is no longer influenced by the need of providing, as John Sargent would say, real public servants, that is, men who should man our civil services or other administrative departments. While the needs of the administration for suitable personnel should not be lost sight of, the justification for a particular type of education should not be limited to the four corners of the Secretariat ; men of character, and possessing the qualities of leadership, are the need of every sphere in our national activity.

v

The Secondary Education (Mudaliar Commission), 1953

Four years after the submission of the Sargent Report, the C.A.B. at their fourteenth meeting held in January, 1948, again considered



the question of secondary education in the country. The Board accepted a resolution at that meeting to the effect that in view of the importance of secondary education in the educational system of the country, a Commission should be appointed on an all-India basis to review the position of secondary education and to make recommendations in regard to the various problems related thereto. The resolution was endorsed by the All-India Education Conference convened by the Education Minister of the Government of India in January, 1948. On the recommendation of the Conference, the Government of India appointed a Committee under the Chairmanship of Dr. Tarachand. The recommendations of this Committee were placed before the meeting of the C.A.B. held at Allahabad in 1949. The Board decided to request the Government of India that the questions raised and some of the conclusions drawn in the report of the Tarachand Committee be referred to the Commission proposed by the Board. The Commission, of course, should not restrict itself to a consideration of the questions raised by the Tarachand Committee but work on a larger canvas which would include such fundamental questions as the aim, objectives and purpose of Secondary Education and its relation to both basic and University education. The request was renewed at the meeting of the Board held in January, 1951. Meanwhile, the Radhakrishnan Commission (1948) had recorded the view that secondary education in India "was the weakest link in our educational machinery and needs urgent reform". Moved by these requests and also impressed with "the desirability of changing over from the prevailing system of secondary education, which is unilateral and predominantly academic in nature, to one which will cater at the secondary stage for different aptitudes and interests, the Government of India established the Secondary Education Commission under the chairmanship of Dr. A. Lakshmanaswami Mudaliar, Vice-Chancellor, Madras University, in September, 1952. The Commission included among its members, Principal John Christie of Jesus College, Oxford, Dr. K. R. Williams, Associate Director, Southern Regional Education Board, Atlanta (U.S.A.), Mrs. Hansa Mehta, Vice-Chancellor, Baroda University, J. A. Taraporewalla, Director of Technical Education, Bombay, Dr. K. L. Srimali, Principal, Vidya Bhavan, Teachers' Training College, Udaipur, Principal M. T.



Vyas, of the New Era School, Bombay, K. G. Saiyidin, Joint Secretary, Education Ministry, Government of India and Principal A. N. Basu of the Central Institute of Education, Delhi, as Member-Secretary. Under its terms of reference, the Commission was asked to suggest measures for the reorganization and improvement of Secondary Education with particular reference to the aims, organization and content of Secondary Education, its relationship to Primary, Basic and Higher Education and for the inter-relations of Secondary Schools of different types, so that "a sound and reasonably uniform system of Secondary Education suited to our needs and resources may be provided for the whole country".

The main point to notice about the appointment of this Commission was its all-India character in spite of the fact that Secondary Education was exclusively a State-subject. The Mudaliar Commission itself has provided the justification. It writes :

"We recognise that Secondary Education is mainly the concern of the State, but, in view of its impact on the life of the country as a whole, both in the field of culture and technical efficiency, the Central Government cannot divest itself of the responsibility to improve its standards and to relate it intelligently to the larger problems of national life. The aim of Secondary Education is to train the youth of the country to be good citizens who will be competent to play their part effectively in the social reconstruction and economic development of their country. The Central Government is, therefore, naturally concerned about the type of education to be given to the youth of the country. It must make sure that Secondary Education will prepare youngmen for their various vocations that are open to them. Moreover, it is directly charged with the responsibility of maintaining proper standards in higher education. This cannot be done unless careful consideration is given to the level of efficiency attained at the secondary stage."

The Commission further pointed out that for the proper functioning of democracy, the Centre must see that every individual is equipped with the necessary knowledge, skill and aptitudes to discharge his duties as a responsible and co-operative citizen. "Training for democracy", the Commission stated, "postulates a balanced education in which social virtues, intellectual development and practical skill all receive due consideration and the pattern of such an education must be envisaged on an all-India basis....we have no doubt whatever that, in view of the crucial importance of education for the whole future and progress of the country in every



sphere, economic, industrial, social and cultural, the Central Government should view education from an over-all national angle and assume the duties of educational guidance and leadership. While there is everything to be said for local and State autonomy in education, it should not be interpreted to justify differences in basic educational policies and objectives." There were certain fields in which the Centre could assume greater responsibility, for instance, in the training of teachers, the formulation of educational and vocational tests, the production and selection of text-books and the training of technicians. There was also room for co-operation between the Centre and the States in regard to the planning of education and to some extent in the matter of its financial responsibility. There is also an understandable interest of the entire country in the role that education is expected to play in checking certain "undesirable tendencies", as for instance, tendencies towards provincialism, regionalism and other sectional differences. "If education fails to play its part effectively in checking these tendencies, if it does not strengthen the forces of national cohesion and solidarity", the Commission is afraid that "our freedom, our national unity as well as our future progress will be seriously imperilled".

There is little doubt that viewed in this larger context, our secondary education system suffered from serious deficiencies, both in relation to the community and to the need for the development of the integrated personality of the pupils. The Commission tabulated the following defects of the existing system :

(1) The education given in our schools is isolated from life. When our students leave school, they feel ill-adjusted and cannot take their place confidently and competently in the community.

(2) The education is narrow and one-sided and fails to train the whole personality of the student. For many decades, it has provided only academic instruction, which meant teaching him a certain number of subjects which either gave information which the adults considered useful or trained him in certain skills like reading and writing. The "non-cognitive" aspects of his personality—his practical aptitudes, his emotions, his appreciation, his tastes—were largely ignored. In other words, our education caters only to a segment of the student's whole personality.

(3) Until comparatively recently, English was both the medium of instruction and a compulsory subject of study, with the result that students who did not possess special linguistic ability were greatly handicapped in their studies.

(4) The methods of teaching generally practised have failed to develop in the students either independence of thought or initiative in action. Lessons are imparted in a mechanical way giving information which is reluctantly memorised by the students.

(5) The increase in the size of classes has considerably reduced personal contact between teachers and pupils. The training of character and inculcation of proper discipline have been seriously undermined. The situation has been further aggravated by the fact that the average efficiency of the teachers has deteriorated ; their economic difficulties and lack of social prestige have tended to create in them a sense of frustration.

(6) Finally, the deadweight of the examination has tended "to curb the teachers' initiative, to stereotype the curriculum, to promote mechanical and lifeless methods of teaching, to discourage all spirit of experimentation and to place the stress on wrong or unimportant things in education".

The Education (Kothari) Commission, if we are permitted to anticipate, have looked at the problem from a somewhat different angle. Under the caption "Relating Education to Life, Needs and Aspirations of the People", the Commission, in paragraph 1·18 of their Report, point out that—

(1) the educational system does not reflect the supreme importance of agriculture which is neglected at all stages and does not attract an adequate share of the top talent in the country ;

(2) the present system is too academic to be of material help in increasing national wealth ;

(3) the schools and colleges are largely unconcerned with the great national effort at reconstruction and their teachers and students greatly remain uncommitted to it ;

(4) instead of promoting social and national integration and making an active effort to promote national consciousness, several features of the educational system promote divisive tendencies : caste loyalties are encouraged in a number of private educational



institutions ; the rich and poor are segregated in schools, the former attending the better type of private schools which charge fees while the latter are forced, by circumstances, to attend free Government or local authority schools of poor quality ; and

(5) it does not emphasise character-formation and makes little or no effort to cultivate moral and spiritual values, particularly the interests, attitudes and values needed for a democratic and socialistic society.

It may be noticed, however, that some of the aspects of education which are mentioned in the previous paragraphs had also received attention at the hands of the Mudaliar Commission. For instance, the Mudaliar Commission had declared that "we have to formulate our aims with reference to these broad categories—the training of character to fit the students to participate creatively as citizens in the emerging democratic social order ; the improvement of their practical and vocational efficiency so that they may play their part in building up the economic prosperity of their country ; and the development of their literary, artistic and cultural interests which are necessary for self-expression and for the full development of their personality, without which a living material culture cannot come into being". In a democracy, as the Commission further pointed out, a citizen must form his own independent judgment on all kinds of complicated social, political and economic issues and, to a large extent, decide his own course of action. Secondary education, which would be the end of all formal education for the majority of the citizens, must assume the responsibility of providing the necessary training for this purpose. Among the other aims and objects of education, the Mudaliar Commission mentioned : (1) the cultivation of discipline, cooperation, social sensitiveness and tolerance ; (2) improvement of vocational efficiency ; (3) development of Personality ; and (4) education for leadership.

There will be general agreement with these analyses. The main problem which is that of giving a general upward push to the entire educational system, from the primary to the University stage, has to be faced necessitating a well-planned expansion of education at all stages so that there may not develop sectional imbalances. The Education (Kothari) Commission has significantly pointed out that there were more illiterate persons in India in 1961



than in 1951, with an addition of 36 million more illiterates. In 1966, it had 20 million more illiterates than in 1961, and that in spite of unprecedented expansion of primary education. The percentage of literacy, however, increased from 16.6 per cent. in 1951 to 24 per cent. in 1961 and 28.6 per cent. in 1966. If literacy is to be made functional, the problem will become still more acute. From this point of view there is complete justification for making primary education work-based and secondary education a self-sufficient course. But it means at the same time that a mere expansion of primary education without reference to the need for accelerating the development of secondary education will be self-defeating. The problem of secondary education has to be viewed from this point of view also.

A rapid expansion of education may be effectively stalled by lack of finance. It is, therefore, necessary to be cautious in planning our advance. Our education has so far followed a more or less unilateral or unilinear mode of development. In other words, too much of our attention has been taken up with the expansion of general education with a distinct bias towards formal literary education. There was hardly any attempt towards a diversification of courses. Even professional degree colleges were slow in coming. At the time of the outbreak of the first World War, in 1939, India had only 11 engineering colleges with an annual intake of 200 students. In fact, it was not until the visit, in 1936-37, of the educational experts, Messrs. Abbott and Wood, that the country's thinking decisively turned towards the need for preparing a blue-print of technical education in India. By 1951 we had 53 engineering and technological institutions of the degree standard and 89 of the diploma standard. By 1961, the number was more than doubled.

In view of this swing of opinion in favour of technical education, it has long been felt necessary to broaden the base of our secondary education. While reserving a detailed treatment of the subject of technical education for a subsequent chapter, we may say a few words here on the attempts that have been made to diversify the educational base at the Secondary and Higher Secondary stages. This has, of course, involved a drastic revision of the existing structural pattern of secondary education. This, on its part, has involved a re-orientation of the existing stages of elementary as well as secondary education, including a lengthening of the total school course so



as to provide for technical courses at the secondary stage. We have already noticed how Gandhiji had worked on the craft-based Basic Education scheme. We also know that manual work now forms an essential part of the normal training of elementary and secondary students in the leading countries of the world. In any case, to provide for higher technical courses of the degree or diploma standard without making any provision for a preliminary basic course at the earlier stages of education was regarded as a fundamental defect of our educational system even a few years ago. Such technical institutes, as there were, formed a class apart, with little or no relation to the general stream of education. The need of the hour was to bring the opportunities of technical training right into the secondary education system, as a necessary part of it.

This could be done only through a well-planned diversification of courses. The idea was to offer a multiple course programme for the secondary school students. Thus a single school would, in addition to the regular school course, offer a choice of special courses, technical, vocational or commercial, in lieu of the options that would be normally available to the students following the general course. The "core" subjects might, of course, remain the same. Or, there might be separate schools specially designed to impart training in technical or vocational subjects. Students belonging to such schools would take the Secondary or Higher Secondary Examinations along with the general course students. It is the somewhat longer period of training required by such students that is one of the factors determining the total duration of the school course. Thus the Mudaliar Commission would make the Higher Secondary course one of four years, instead of three, and entry to the higher technical institutes would be regulated accordingly. This is how the Commission puts it : "A somewhat longer period of training before entrance to the University is likely to be useful both for those who want to pursue higher education and for those who finish their education at this stage. Judging by the requirements of several of the diversified courses that we have in view, we feel that a somewhat longer period of training will be necessary if they have to be taught with thoroughness and efficiency." Implementation of India's Five-Year Plans has also created large manpower needs in all directions and it is

necessary in the national interest to plan for the supply of such needs both on a short-term and a long-term basis. Trained workers must be found in tens of thousands and it is always preferable to "catch 'em young".

The structural pattern of secondary education conceived by the Secondary Education Commission followed this line of thinking. In an attempt to lay down a scheme of integrated education, their proposals covered not only the secondary stage but also post-secondary (including University) stages. It also provided for a transition to higher technical courses for students completing the secondary (or higher secondary) course. Briefly, the new structural pattern of secondary education proposed by the Commission stood as follows² :

Under the new organizational structure, education was to commence after a 4-or 5-year period of primary or Junior Basic education and should include (a) the Middle or Senior Basic or Junior Secondary stage of 3 years and (b) the Higher Secondary stage of 4 years. The existing Intermediate stage was to be replaced by the Higher Secondary stage which should be of 4 years' duration, one year of the Intermediate classes being included in it. As a consequence, the First Degree course of the University should be of 3 years' duration. For those who passed out of the High School, there should be provision for a Pre-University course of one year, during which period the scheme of studies should be planned with due regard to the needs of the degree or the professional course to be taken by the students. Admission to the professional courses should be open to those who had completed the Higher Secondary course, or had taken the one year's Pre-University course. In the professional colleges a pre-professional course of one year was to be provided for the students, preferably in the professional colleges themselves. Multi-purpose schools were to be established, wherever possible, to provide varied courses of interest to students with diverse aims, aptitudes and abilities. Those who successfully completed such courses should be given opportunities to take up higher specia-

² See Report of the Secondary Education Commission (1953)—Summary of Recommendations, Chap. IV.



lised courses in polytechnics or technological institutions. All States should provide special facilities for agricultural education in rural schools and such courses should include horticulture, animal husbandry and cottage industry.

The Commission also recommended the establishment "in large number" of technical schools either separately or as part of multi-purpose schools. So far as evolving a suitable pattern of technical courses at the secondary stage was concerned, the Commission would leave the task to the All-India Council of Technical Education. It must, however, be mentioned that the technical training to be provided in the technical high schools or in the multi-purpose schools was not intended to produce artisans. These schools, the Commission suggested, should not be different from the ordinary high schools except that, besides giving training in core subjects like language, science, mathematics, and "some" social studies, they would offer the following courses : (i) applied mathematics and geometrical drawing, (ii) elements of workshop technology and (iii) elements of mechanics and electrical engineering. Students of these schools would be counterparts of those in the four upper classes of the Higher Secondary Schools.

As already stated, the duration of the entire (higher secondary) schools course would, under the Commission's scheme, be extended by one year over the then existing course. As there is some difference of opinion as to the total duration of the secondary (or higher secondary) course, including the age-breaks at different levels, it would be pertinent to follow the Secondary Education Commission's arguments for extending the school course. The Commission starts with the principle that "secondary education is a complex unit by itself and not merely a preparatory stage ; that at the end of this period, the student should be in a position, if he wishes, to enter on the responsibilities of life and to take up some useful vocation". A period of 7 years of secondary education (covering the age group 11-17), according to the Commission, "should enable the school to give a thorough training in the courses of study taken up by the student and also help him to attain a reasonable degree of maturity in knowledge, understanding and judgment which would stand him in good stead in later life". Accordingly, and also for the reasons already stated in the preceding paragraph, the Commission thought

it best to extend the secondary stage of education by one year and to plan the courses for a period of four years, after the middle school or the Senior Basic stage. Their desire to follow the proposal of the Radhakrishnan Commission to abolish the Intermediate stage and extend the Degree course to 3 years was dictated by their concern to keep the total period of education, Secondary and University, the same as before due to "the large financial implications for educational authorities as well as for the students" of any further addition to the total period of education. But the Radhakrishnan Commission had proposed a 12-year school course and it was the Central Advisory Board of Education which at their meeting held in February, 1954, reduced the period to 11 years. Recent opinion—that of the Education Commission (1964-65) for instance—has once again veered round to the desirability of a 12-year course.

The Mudaliar Commission, in making their recommendation that the period of secondary education should cover the age group 11-17 was troubled by the fact that it had to be adjusted to the scheme of Basic Education accepted by the Government. Contrived as an instrument of mass education, the scheme of Basic Education covers the age group 6-14. A break occurs at the age of 11, dividing it into two stages, the Junior Basic (6-11) and Senior Basic (11-14). The Mudaliar Commission, in extenuation of its own scheme, points out that the scope of Basic Education, as defined in the Report of the Zakir Husain Committee and the subsequent Reports of the C.A.B. "covers not only the stage of primary education, as generally understood in India, but also a part of secondary education. Thus the Senior Basic stage really falls within the age group of secondary education and we have included it there accordingly". In order that there might not be any "clash" with the Basic School, the Commission recommended that the general lay-out and standard of syllabus in the Senior Basic, Middle and Lower Secondary Schools "should be largely similar". Finally, to clinch the argument, the Commission, with dry humour, took comfort in the fact that, after all, the number of full basic schools "is still comparatively small" and it would take a long time to convert the very large number of Middle and Lower Secondary Schools into full (Senior) Basic schools. The actual figures—showing the position as it was in 1950-51 and as it turned out a decade later—are given below :

[TABLE]

	1950-51	1960-61
Total number of Primary and Junior Basic Schools ..	2,09,671 (33,379)	3,30,399 (65,891)
Total number of Middle and Senior Basic Schools	13,596 (351)	49,663 (14,321)

(Figures in parenthesis refer to the number of Basic Schools of each category)

It would be seen from the above figures that during the 10-year period (1950-60) the number of Senior Basic Schools increased from 351 to 14,321 and accounted for about 30 per cent. of the total number of Middle and Senior Basic Schools in the later year. This cannot, by any stretch of imagination, be called a slow rate of transformation. The subsequent progress of basic education is yet to be assessed. In any case, it is no longer an active issue because this part of the recommendations of the Secondary Education Commission have now been overshadowed by those of the Education Commission of 1964-66 to which we shall now turn before we attempt to make a final assessment. A more important point is the orientation of the Basic Schools *vis-à-vis* the regular schools. It is not clear if the Mudaliar Commission wanted the entire Middle School stage finally to conform to the Basic system. The Education Commission has, on the other hand, taken a definite stand on the work-orientation of the entire secondary education system.

VI

Education Commission (1964-66)

Before a detailed reference is made to the Education Commission's view of Secondary Education, and the new set-up that it has proposed, it would be useful to have a look at the structure of secondary education as it obtains in India at present.

Education, including Universities, is a State subject in India under Entry 11 of the State List of subjects. The exceptions are those pro-



vided for in entries 63-66 of List I (Union List) and entry 25 of List II (Concurrent List). The exceptions are—

Union List :

63. The institutions known at the commencement of this Constitution as the Benares Hindu University, the Aligarh Muslim University and the Delhi University, and any other institution declared by Parliament by law to be an institution of national importance.

64. Institutions for scientific or technical education financed by the Government of India wholly or in part and declared by Parliament by law to be institutions of national importance.

65. Union agencies and institutions for—

- (a) professional, vocational or technical training, including the training of police officers ; or
- (b) the promotion of special studies or research ; or
- (c) scientific or technical assistance in the investigation or detection of crime.

66. Co-ordination and determination of standards in institutions for higher education and research and scientific and technical institutions.

Concurrent List :

25. Vocational and technical training of labour.

The Education Commission itself comes under Entry 66 of the Union List. The acceptance of, and the responsibility for implementing, the recommendations of the Commission, particularly with regard to Elementary and Secondary Education, is, however, the concern of the State Government. For, while the Union Government have the power of "co-ordination and determination of standards in institutions of higher education and research," elementary and secondary education is the exclusive responsibility of the State Governments. This at once explains the confusing variety, both structural and functional, of these stages of education in different parts of India, and the difficulty of making them conform to uniform patterns recommended by a Central Commission on Education or sponsored by the Central Government in the Ministry of Education. On the other side of the picture is the fact that the proposals are usually the crystallised product of prolonged consultations and confabulations, of wide exchange of views and experiences, of an effort to reconcile divergent policies and interests, and the ultimate arrival (if possible) at a consensus. Periodical consultations among State Ministers of Education, Vice-Chancellors, teachers' organizations, and the work of such national bodies as the Inter-University Board, the University Grants' Commission, the Central Advisory Board

of Education, the Estimates Committee as well as *ad hoc* bodies set up for specific purposes, are also helpful in developing such consensus and creating an atmosphere for policy decisions and constructive thinking without necessarily sacrificing regional interests.

Let us first look at the structural variety of secondary education as prevailing in the different States of India. Even in the same State, secondary education does not conform to a single pattern.

So far as the total duration of education leading up to the First Degree is concerned, it varies from 14 years to 16 years including the elementary stages (*i.e.* lower primary and upper primary or middle) in different areas, as is shown below :

Assam and Nagaland ³	.. .. .. ..	16 years
Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Kerala, Madras and Orissa.		15 years
Jammu & Kashmir, Punjab, Rajasthan, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Mysore and Uttar Pradesh.		14 years

All these States, with the exception of Uttar Pradesh and the University of Bombay in Maharashtra, have adopted the three-year degree course (B.A., B.Sc. and B.Com.). Uttar Pradesh has 2-year Intermediate Colleges and 2-year Degree Colleges while in the University of Bombay there is a 2-year Intermediate course followed by a 2-year Degree course. Correspondingly, there are significant variations in the duration of secondary education in the different States as well as in the pattern of such education. In general, the States have a 5-year lower primary stage. The exceptions are Andhra, Kerala, Nagaland, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Goa, Daman and Diu and L.M. & A. Islands, each of which has a 4-year lower primary course. In Gujarat and Maharashtra, however, where there is no Middle School or Upper Primary break, the primary stage continues up to class VII (7 years). With these exceptions, the lower primary course generally covers the first five classes.

³ The 12 years of school education in Assam and Nagaland, however, consist of 2 pre-primary (infant) classes while the next 10 classes are numbered I to X. As regards schools with 11 classes (in 6 States), the Education Commission thinks it "more appropriate" to treat class I as pre-primary, particularly where the age of admission is less than six.

The total period of instruction before leaving school exposes a more confusing picture. Assam, Nagaland and NEFA take 12 years to reach the Secondary School Leaving Certificate (S.S.L.C.) level (corresponding to the School Final in West Bengal) while Andhra, Bihar, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Madras, West Bengal, Goa, Daman & Diu, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, and Pondicherry take 11 years. The rest, including West Bengal, take 10 years. Most of these States have a public (external) examination at the end of the secondary course followed by another public examination (Pre-University) for entering the University. The exceptions are Madhya Pradesh where students, after 8 years of primary course (lower 5 years, upper 3 years), go to the higher secondary course, and Uttar Pradesh (as well the Bombay University) where students, after passing the S.S.L.C. examination join the 2-year intermediate course. In either case, those who take up the higher secondary course (after passing through the primary stages, lower and upper) join the Degree classes while the others, passing the S.S.L.C. or School Final examination, have to pass another qualifying examination (Pre-University) before they are eligible to proceed to the First Degree.

It is necessary to add that this pattern of education developed more or less in conformity with the recommendations of the Secondary Education Commission. This was an attempt to promote an all-India pattern of school classes with a total duration of 11 years (5 years of lower primary, 3 years of upper primary or middle and 3 years of higher secondary classes). This was to be followed by a 3-year course for the first degree (B.A., B.Sc., B.Com.) and 2-years for the second (Master's) degree. We find, therefore, that while the States (with the exception of Uttar Pradesh and the University of Bombay in Maharashtra) have implemented the proposal for a 3-year degree course, only about 5 States have taken steps to convert the previously existing high schools into higher secondary schools, with the result that, as the Education Commission tells us, only about 25 per cent of the total number of secondary schools could be upgraded into higher secondary schools by the end of the third Five-Year Plan. This has resulted in the existence of parallel courses of study giving rise to problems of adjustment. Thus, where there are two public examinations, *viz.*, the Secondary (S.S.L.C. or S.F.) and the Higher Secondary examinations, the first year of the 3-year Degree



classes receive two different streams of students, one coming straight from the Higher Secondary schools, that is, after passing the Higher Secondary Examination, and the other coming *via* the Pre-University classes, after passing two successive public examinations, *i.e.*, the School Final (or the S.S.L.C.) and the P.U. Examinations. This latter class of students thus have to take four (or five) public examinations including two (or three) of the first Degree Examinations (Parts I, II, and in some cases, III) while those coming from the Higher Secondary Schools have to take three (or four) public examinations. Therefore, for the former set of students, the burden of examinations is actually increased compared to what it was before the introduction of the 3-year degree course.

The Pre-University classes in Arts, Science and Commerce are also academically ill-designed since the total number of working days for these classes hardly exceeds 16 to 18 weeks in which teachers have to rush through the courses of study making it doubly difficult for immature young students, fresh from school (who would naturally require some time for settling down to an entirely different type of academic life at the beginning of the session), to follow the class lectures intelligently and keep pace with the progress of studies. Further, the co-existence of the secondary and higher secondary schools has introduced a new form of "class" system. The latter type of schools, compared to 10-class schools enjoy a higher status, and the better type of boys and girls are attracted towards these schools, while the former *e.g.*, the ten-class schools (as in West Bengal), are correspondingly depreciated in value, with the result that there is a general atmosphere of neglect around these schools. It is, therefore understandable, as our experience in West Bengal shows, that the percentage of failure is of the highest in both the School Final and the Pre-University examinations. The only point that can be argued in favour of the P.U.-passed students is that these students, since they have presumably spent some months in a College (as students in Pre-University classes), attended lectures by competent, well-qualified College teachers, used fairly well-stocked libraries and worked in well-equipped laboratories, before they joined the first year of the 3-year degree course, are already adjusted to College life and are accustomed to lectures, College style, have taken one University examination, and mixed with a



heterogenous body of students. They are thus in a better position than their compatriots from the Higher Secondary Schools in adjusting themselves to the difficulties of an advanced University course.

Much of the criticism of the new policy is centred on the fact that it was not given a fair trial. For instance, it was intended that the Pre-University classes would be a temporary expedient, that is, until all the High Schools were upgraded. No sincere and sustained attempt was in fact made to complete the process.⁴ Sufficient funds were perhaps not placed at the disposal of the educational authorities to meet the cost of conversion. The Higher Secondary classes (four as proposed by the Mudaliar Commission, three as subsequently decided) required teaching of an advanced standard since they really supplanted the old intermediate college classes and the syllabi were also revised accordingly. Again, subjects which were previously taught at the college level were now introduced at the school level. New and unfamiliar apparatus for science teaching required new practical skill and careful use. For all this, the need was felt for teachers with an academic competence higher than that of the ordinary school teachers who took their B.A. or B.Sc. pass degree years ago. That meant that qualified teaching personnel must be made available in large number and that, again, would mean a higher scale of expenditure. So both by way of large capital costs in the shape of increased and better accommodation (class rooms, libraries, laboratories, hostels etc.), plus higher recurring costs due to the introduction of improved pay-scales to attract qualified teachers, the new policy involved a heavy drain on the State exchequer. It is no wonder that many of the States elected to follow their own policies while the others, like West Bengal, allowed the old and the new system to run side by side since the process of conversion came to a halt, mainly for want of finance and lack of enthusiasm.

This was not a very hopeful situation which Dr. Kothari and his colleagues in the Education Commission, all eminent educationists and scholars and administrators, faced. After a full and exhaustive

⁴ It may be mentioned in this connection that it has been found possible to upgrade all the high schools in Delhi. Such wholesale upgrading has also been made in the State of Madhya Pradesh. See page 385.



consideration of the issues, the Kothari Commission made a further set of revolutionary proposals.

VII

A New Deal

In presenting their own proposals for educational reconstruction, the Education Commission makes two important preliminary observations. In the first place, the Commission, while recognising that there was a strong body of opinion (including the report, published in 1962, of the Committee on Emotional Integration) which wanted a uniform pattern of secondary education throughout the country and had a vaguely felt concept of a national system of education, did not deem it either necessary or desirable to impose a uniform pattern of school and college classes in all parts of the country. They based their view on the fact that the vastness of the country and the immense diversity of local traditions and conditions demand a certain element of flexibility in the educational structure. The main instrument which the Commission has devised for the co-ordination of educational standards at the school level in the different States is the creation of what they have called "the Common School System of Public Education" covering all parts of the country and all stages of school education and providing equality of access to all children. This system, according to the Commission, would include all schools conducted by government and local authorities and all recognised and aided private schools. It should be maintained at an adequate level of quality and efficiency. The first step to realise this goal is to ensure the removal of "the undesirable discrimination" that now exists between teachers working under different managements—government, local authority and private organizations. The second step, according to the Commission, aims at providing ultimately free education at the school stage through a phased programme, fees at the primary stage being abolished by the end of the fourth Five-Year Plan and those at the lower secondary stage by the end of the fifth Plan. Thirdly, the Commission recommended that the roles of local bodies and

private organizations in school education should be properly integrated with those of the State Governments "to ensure that the minimum conditions necessary for the successful working of educational institutions are provided in *every* institution within the common system of public education, irrespective of its management."⁵ This, of course, is something different from imposing a uniform *pattern* of school education. Finally, the Commission argued that since the different States of India are at unequal levels of development, "a uniform pattern might be *above* the resources and real needs of the backward areas and *below* the capacity and requirements of the advanced areas and might operate to the disadvantage of both."⁶

The second observation of the Commission relates to the total duration of the school course. The reference is not to the professional courses but to the general school course leading up to the First Degree in arts and science. As we have seen, both the Sadler Commission and the Radhakrishnan Commission had recommended a lengthening of the school course to 12 years. So did the Mudaliar Commission and the Committee on Emotional Integration. As recently as 1964, as the Kothari Commission points out, the Conference of State Education Ministers also resolved that "a twelve-year course of schooling before admission to the degree course was the goal towards which the country must work." In fact, it was the Central Advisory Board of Education, which, acting on the advice of the Survey Committee appointed by it, had recommended the reduction of the originally proposed 12-year term to 11-years. But we have also seen that many of the States did not accept the recommendation of the C.A.B., with the result that the accepted duration varied from 14 years to 16 years in different areas of the country. The Education Commission now throws its weight behind the proposal for a 12-year school course followed by a course "of three years or more" for the First Degree. The detailed proposals⁷ are as follows :

⁵ Education Commission (1964-66) Report, Chap. IV, p. 251.

⁶ *Ibid.*, Chap. II, p. 28.

⁷ *Ibid.*, Chap. II, p. 29.



(a) A pre-school stage .. . . . .	..	..	..	1 to 3 years
(b) A primary stage .. . . . .	..	..	..	7 to 8 years
(i) Lower primary stage .. . . . .	..	4/5 years	..	
(ii) Higher primary stage .. . . . .	..	3 years	..	
(c) A lower secondary or high-school stage :				
(i) General education, or .. . . . .	..	..	..	3 or 2 years
(ii) Vocational education .. . . . .	..	..	..	1 to 3 years
(d) A higher secondary stage :				
(i) General education .. . . . .	..	..	..	2 years
(ii) Vocational education .. . . . .	..	..	..	1 to 3 years
(e) A higher education stage :				
(i) First Degree .. . . . .	..	..	..	3 years or more
(ii) Second or Research Degree .. . . . .	..	..	..	Varying durations
Age of entry to Class I .. . . . .	..	..	..	6 years

In clarification of the above schedule, the Commission explains that the first ten years of schooling covering the primary stage of 7 or 8 years and a lower secondary stage of 3 or 2 years will provide a course of general education without any specialisation. This will cover the age-group 6-14. At the end of the primary stage, a proportion of students—about 20 per cent—will step off the school system and enter working life. Another 20 per cent will step off the stream of general education into different vocational courses which may range from 1 to 3 years, so that about 60 per cent will continue further in the stream of general education. The first break will thus occur at the age of 14 plus. At the end of ten years of school education, there will be an external examination and the Commission lays down that "the standard at the end of the ten years will be broadly comparable in respect of curriculum and level of attainment to the national standard laid down for the end of this stage." The Commission visualises that about 40 per cent of the students will step off the school system at the end of 10 years and enter working life and about 30 per cent will step off to enter vocational courses of 1 to 3 years' duration. The remaining 30 per cent will continue further in the stream of general education whose "duration will be one, and ultimately, two years."

In presenting this scheme, the Commission stresses two points. First, the system of "streaming" in schools of general education which now begins with class IX should be given up and no attempt at specialisation should be made till after class X. Naturally, this would require a considerable reorganization of the existing curri-

cula of the Higher Secondary Schools. Secondly, "the idea that every secondary school should be raised to the higher secondary status should also be abandoned." Referring to the achievement in this respect of Delhi and Madhya Pradesh, the Commission points out that Delhi's achievement has been possible because it is a metropolitan area. So far as Madhya Pradesh is concerned, the cost of the conversion "has been heavy in terms of deterioration of standards as well as of financial outlays."

It is, perhaps necessary at this stage to put the matter in the correct perspective without pre-judging the basic stand of the Commission. If Delhi is a metropolitan area, so is also Calcutta. But Calcutta did not succeed while Delhi succeeded in upgrading her secondary schools. On similar grounds, the argument resting on deterioration of standards in Madhya Pradesh following conversion of her schools to the higher secondary status does not appear to be very logical. Deterioration of standards seems to be a general malaise affecting the educational system and it would not be true to fact to ascribe it simply to the prolongation of the total duration of school education. It may as well be due to other, and perhaps more powerful, reasons. I have already suggested that it would be premature to judge an experiment before it is given a fair and honest trial. *I feel that the scheme of higher secondary education, in spite of its many defects, has not been sincerely and honestly tried out.* I am prepared to concede, however, that the heavy cost of the conversion of the high schools into the higher secondary schools has been one of the deterrent factors in improving the quality of the converted schools. The great haste with which some of the schools had to be so converted also stood in the way of a correct assessment of the qualitative needs. A maladjusted syllabus of studies as between the high school, the pre-university and the higher secondary stages as well as the heavy syllabi prescribed for the different subjects have been other contributory factors. Finally, as already indicated, the dearth of qualified teachers for classes IX to XI has undoubtedly made it difficult to maintain adequate standards of teaching which, as it is, had never been high even in the 10-class schools, barring a few exceptions. Admitting, however, that there has been a general—one might even say, progressive—deterioration of standards, inspite of the attempt to upgrade the high schools, the country in general, and the educational authorities in particular,

are faced with a choice between retaining the 10-class schools or making a more realistic arrangement for an extension of the duration of education before a student is permitted to join the degree classes.

To put the problem in more concrete terms :

(1) We can go back to the old system of 10-class schools, followed by a four-year (2 + 2) college course (for the first degree) or a variant of it, or a 10-class school followed by a 5-year (2 + 3) College course. In the latter case the first 2 years in the college may be an extended pre-University course, followed by a 2-year or 3-year degree course.

(2) We can continue with the present policy of upgrading all the 10-class schools into 11-class schools followed by the 3-year degree course.

(3) We can extend the school course to 12 years, as suggested by the Sadler, Radhakrishnan, and also partly by the Mudaliar Commissions, with or without modifications.

(4) We can retain the 10-class schools and add two more classes forming the higher secondary course. This may be done by adding these two classes to the 10-class schools or one more class to the 11-class schools ; or, as a variation, these may be attached to colleges to form a 2-year preparatory course, in which case, it would be similar to the variant proposed in (1) above.

There is another possibility which I shall discuss later. To return to the proposals of the Education Commission : Under the Commission's scheme, there should be, as a rule, no specialised courses of study beginning with class IX. Classes IX and X, as already stated, will form part of the first ten years of general education. The Higher Secondary course, consisting of classes XI and XII (and during the transitional period, class XI only), will provide for specialised studies in different subjects and will constitute an independent, self-contained unit like the "Sixth Form" in England. Under the existing scheme, following the recommendations of the Mudaliar Commission, the old two-year Intermediate classes in most of the States have been distributed by adding one year to the High School course and one year to the old two-year Degree Course. Thus, without disturbing the total duration of the education (14 years), it is split up into (1) eleven years of school education of which the last three years would form the higher secondary stage, followed by (2) a three-year degree course. In so far as it was found necessary or unavoidable to retain the

10-class school, a pre-University class was introduced to which students who had passed the School Final examination after ten years of schooling would be admitted prior to their entry to the degree course. In other words, the P.U. class is meant to correspond to class XI of the Higher Secondary school. Apart from this correspondence in time, in other matters the two courses are completely independent. The difference between the two is manifest, for instance, in the syllabi of studies, for while the Higher Secondary course covers a period of three years (Class IX-XI), in the other case, the P.U. class is a one-year self-contained course meant for the School Final passed students. There is disparity also in the exercise of control in so far as the Higher Secondary course is placed under the Board of Secondary Education, the P.U. course is under the University. The Education Commission has proposed the transfer of the Pre-University classes to the 11-class schools, in pursuance of its scheme of an extended school course of twelve years. A transitional period is visualised during which the 10-year High schools will have one year (class XI) added to them and the Pre-University classes retained in the colleges until the upgrading of all the schools to 12-year class schools is completed. During this period of transition, the State Education Departments in consultation with the Universities in the State should make arrangements to start the higher secondary class or classes in selected schools. These classes—Classes XI and XII—are meant to be a self-contained unit which, presumably, is not intended to be integrated with the lower classes and which students from other schools can join.

The Commission apparently believes in "go-slow" methods for it posits a period of twelve years (in two stages) to complete the lengthening process. That is because the Commission feels that the lengthening of the school course should not be undertaken until there is a better utilization of existing facilities and the schools are prepared to introduce this important reform. After all, time is one of the many "inputs" that can bring about improvement in quality. Other "inputs" necessary for raising the standards include such factors as motivation of students, competence of teachers, upgraded curricula, better methods of teaching and evaluation, improved text books and teaching materials as well as adequate equipment, buildings and other physical facilities. The Commission is of the opinion that



qualitative improvement will result from the cumulative effect of all these factors, and, if they are of the right kind, the increase in the duration will certainly add to the improvement in quality ; otherwise it would be so much wastage in money and efforts.

To sum up : The Commission recommends that—

(1) The higher secondary stage should cover a period of two years and should be located exclusively in the schools.

(2) Steps should be taken to implement this reform through a phased programme spread over the next twenty years (1965-85).

(3) As a first step in this direction, the Pre-University course should be transferred from the Colleges to the schools on a high priority basis within the next ten years.

(4) Simultaneously, attempts should be made in the fourth Five-Year Plan for improving the utilisation of the existing school period to the best possible extent, for preparation of the teachers for the two-year course by expanding and improving the post-graduate stage and for the working out of pilot projects with two-year higher secondary courses in selected secondary schools.

(5) With the beginning of the fifth Five-Year Plan (1971-76), the implementation of the programme should start on a large scale and it should be completed by the end of the Seventh Plan (1985-86).

(6) Provision should be made from the very outset for the introduction of different types of vocational courses at the higher secondary stage, varying in duration from one to three years which would prepare young persons for employment.

The curricular changes proposed by the Commission are not less important than their proposals for lengthening of the school course.

For the Lower Primary Stage (classes I to IV) the Commission proposes the following curriculum : One language—the mother tongue or the regional language ; mathematics ; study of the environment (covering science and social studies in classes III and IV) ; creative activities ; work-experience and social service, and health education.

The Upper Primary Stage (classes V to VIII) will have the following curriculum : Two languages (*i*) the mother tongue or the regional language and (*ii*) Hindi or English. A third language—English, Hindi or the regional language—may be taken up on an optional basis ; other subjects include : mathematics ; science ; social studies or history ; geography and civics ; art ; work experience and social

service ; physical education and education in moral and spiritual values.

The Lower Secondary Stage (classes VIII to X) will have : three languages* ; mathematics ; science ; history, geography and civics ; art ; work-experience and social service ; physical education and education in moral and spiritual values.

The Education Commission proposes the following subject-areas which, according to them, should form part of the curriculum for the Higher Secondary course. (It, however, adds that the list is "suggestive" pending examination by an expert body.) The curriculum suggested is : (1) Any two languages, including any modern Indian language, any modern foreign language and any classical language : (2) any three subjects from the following : an additional language, history, geography, economics, logic, psychology, sociology, art, physics, chemistry, mathematics, biology, geology and home science ; (3) work-experience and social service ; physical education ; art or craft ; and (4) education in moral and spiritual values.

It is to be noted that for all the three stages of school education, work experience and social service, physical education, art or craft and education in moral and spiritual values are introduced as new subjects.

There are certain features in the curricular distribution as between the several stages—Lower Primary, Higher Primary, Lower Secondary and Higher Secondary stages—which deserve attention. The Commission has taken the fundamental position that the present system of specialization in the shape of "streams" for Higher Secondary students which starts at class IX is too early for the age-group concerned. Accordingly, the Commission has proposed to re-construct the courses of study for the different stages in such a manner that for the first seven years of schooling, including four

* In non-Hindi speaking areas, these languages will normally be the mother tongue or the regional language, Hindi at a high or lower level and English at a higher or lower level. In Hindi speaking areas, there will be mother tongue or the regional language, English (or Hindi, if English has already been taken as the mother tongue) and a modern Indian language other than Hindi ; with a possible fourth language—a classical language—on an optional basis. The Government Resolution on the subject is discussed in the chapter on "The Language Question" (q. v.).



years of Lower Primary and three years of Higher Primary stages, there will be an undifferentiated course of general education for all. Even in classes VIII to X, there will not be any diversification of courses but there will be provision of courses at two levels and options in creative activities and types of work experience. In other words, there will be, for the vast majority of students, a single curricular stream from Class I to class X. This more or less goes back to the early system of the Matriculation Examination which, as in Calcutta University, offered an undifferentiated course upto class VIII and provided for two elective subjects, without streaming, for special study, in addition to five compulsory papers which included English (2 papers), Vernacular language, Mathematics and Sanskrit. The Education Commission proposes specialization only at the Higher Secondary stage (classes XI-XII).

The curricular arrangement proposed by the Commission follows certain aims and objectives appropriate to each stage. The Commission is right in thinking that children at the Lower Primary stage (classes I to IV) should receive instruction in the basic tools of learning such as reading, writing and computation, and should learn to adjust themselves to their surroundings through an elementary study of their physical and social environment. They should also be provided with the opportunity of participating in activities which develop their constructive and creative skills and teach them the habits of healthy living. So far as students in classes V to VII are concerned, in addition to the mother tongue, they would be required to study a second language (Hindi or English), their arithmetical skill would develop into the acquisition of more difficult mathematical knowledge, while environmental activities would lead to the study of natural and physical sciences, history, geography, and civics. Constructive and creative skills would provide the basis for the practice of simple arts and crafts, and the practice of healthy living would serve as the foundation for physical education. The next stage—that is, the Lower Secondary stage—covers the period of adolescence. It is now time for the student to be trained for citizenship in a democratic society. He would require the development of certain skills, attitudes and qualities of character such as the capacity of clear thinking, the ability to communicate easily with one's fellowmen, the scientific attitude of mind, a sense of true patriotism and an appre-



ciation of the value of productive work. "The needs of adolescence," the Commission points out, "are related not only to the acquisition of knowledge and the promotion of intellectual ability but the fuller development of the physical, emotional, aesthetic and moral aspects of the pupil's personality." The school curriculum should be oriented accordingly. It is to be expected that towards the end of the secondary course, the student concerned should have formed his aptitudes and developed his special interests and abilities. After the Lower Secondary course, he should be ready to be helped in the choice of his future career and educational course. This he would do at the Higher Secondary stage where he would have the opportunity to specialise in the areas of his choice. It is also at this stage that what the Commission calls "an extensive and varied programme of vocational education" waits for him. This is the sort of diversion which the Commission would provide at this stage. In the general stream the student will select for special study a combination of any three subjects (in addition to a third language), based on the work already done at the Lower Secondary stage. Since no provision has been made for technical, commercial and agricultural courses (as well as fine arts and home science) at the Higher Secondary stage, as conceived by the Commission, it is expected that these would be studied in special vocational institutions.

VIII

A Reassessment

In the preceding sections an attempt was made to trace the evolution of a policy in the field of secondary education in India. We have seen how the aims and objectives of such education have broadened and how the structural pattern of such education has been the subject of various experiments in response to the need for reflecting the change in objectives. Yet in spite of all this, secondary education has yet to take on a final shape.

We have been mainly concerned in this chapter with the concept and structure of education as envisaged by the Secondary Education Commission of 1953-54 and that embodied in the Report of the Kothari



Commission (1964-66). The recommendations of these bodies bear testimony to the sharp differences that divide educational opinion on this crucial issue. The Kothari Commission has drastically modified almost all the major recommendations of the Mudaliar Commission and produced its own blue-print of transformation of the existing system, just as the Mudaliar Commission had done in respect of the educational system prevailing at that time. The only major point on which there is agreement of a sort between these two bodies as well as with the Radhakrishnan Commission is that school education should cover a total period of twelve years. A twelve-year school period had also been recommended by the Sadler Commission in 1917. The emergence, instead, of the eleven-class Higher Secondary schools was due to the fact that the Central Advisory Board of Education to whom the matter had been referred modified the twelve-class school idea into eleven-class. The Education Commission has now revived the idea of twelve-class schools, but with a big difference. In the first place, the multi-purpose school idea is dropped. As already noted, the first ten years of school, according to the Commission, would provide an undifferentiated but continuous general education course upto the Lower Secondary standard. Secondly, even in the two-year Higher Secondary course, there will be no "streams" but only options in respect of certain subjects. "Moral and Spiritual Values" are introduced as a subject for the first time at both the Lower and Higher Secondary stages. There is no doubt that this is a move in the right direction though there may be doubts how far it would be possible to implement such a programme.

Educational circles are well aware that, before the Kothari Commission reported, there was a widespread public feeling that the changes made in the educational structure following the recommendations of the Mudaliar Commission were too complicated, confusing and not justified by results. The Mudaliar Commission had not also fully worked out the severe financial strain that their proposals to upgrade the high schools and to convert the intermediate colleges into degree colleges would impose on the State exchequers. In addition, there would be the difficulty of finding an adequate number of qualified and trained teachers for the upgraded schools. By necessity such teachers should have the same type of qualifications



as are required in the case of college teachers with good Master's degrees. Such teachers would naturally prefer college teaching to school teaching in view of the inferior status of school teachers and diminished prospects of promotion to higher posts which every lecturer, on satisfactory service, can look forward to in a college. Of course, if there is a glut of job-seekers with a good Master's degree, some of them would be forced by circumstances to seek teaching posts in schools but they would be a dissatisfied and frustrated lot (unless they loved teaching children and were willing and able to make monetary sacrifices) and would leave the school at the first opportunity. Naturally, most of the newly created Higher Secondary schools have been obliged to entertain the services of college lecturers on a part-time basis for teaching in the Higher Secondary classes. In this respect, schools in urban areas have been at an advantage compared to schools functioning in rural areas where even colleges find it difficult to recruit suitable teachers. No doubt, the Secondary Boards permit Honours graduates or M.A.'s and M.Sc.'s who had taken their first degree in the pass course to teach the Higher Secondary classes, and if they are trained, they get a scale of pay which compares favourably with that of college teachers at the start. There are, however, two points to be considered in this connection. The first is that there are now-a-days few M.Sc.'s who did not take their B.Sc. degree with Honours, and such persons (*i.e.* M.Sc.'s with Honours degrees) who are in heavy demand in the affiliated colleges as well as in other lines would hardly think of joining a school as an assistant teacher. As regards B.A.'s and B.Sc.'s with Honours, it must be remembered that such persons were disqualified from being appointed as teachers in the old intermediate classes or the existing intermediate colleges. Students in the pre-University classes in the colleges still enjoy the advantage of studying under teachers of a superior academic calibre. Under the Commission's proposals, class XII will be a still higher class which, along with class XI, will form an independent unit, but exclusively transferred to schools. I have, of course, not the least objection to B.A. and B.Sc. (Honours) teachers being allowed to teach the Higher Secondary classes. In fact, under the existing circumstances, a trained B.A. and B.Sc. (Honours) teacher would be more suitable for appointment to schools than persons who consider themselves over-qualified for teaching posts in schools. In any case,



the question has to be faced if the proposed transfer of the Higher Secondary classes to schools with all its consequences would lead to a further deterioration of standards. I only want to suggest for the consideration of educationists whether classes XI and XII should be transferred exclusively to schools or whether they should be constituted into separate intermediate colleges or, still better, attached, as preparatory classes, to the degree colleges.

This point may be pursued a little further. Even if it is agreed that classes XI and XII should be institutionally separated from schools, and that they should be constituted into intermediate colleges, there need be no objection to these being placed under the control of the Board of Secondary Education. In that case, it would be preferable to re-name the Board as the Board of Secondary and Intermediate Education as had been suggested half a century ago by the Sadler Commission. Such a Board was established at Dacca when the degree classes of its Colleges were transferred to the University. If the same thing happened in Calcutta, I think it would not be difficult to recruit suitable staff for the proposed intermediate colleges. For one thing, the question of status would raise no difficulty. Further, teachers appointed to such colleges, after gaining some experience, could well look forward to appointment in the degree colleges. The pay-scales of the teaching staff of the two types of Colleges must, of course, be the same ; this would, among other things, remove one of the causes for frequent defections. Such pay-scales cannot at present be offered to school teachers because it would introduce an element of discrimination among teachers, particularly if they happen to be fairly senior and efficient. So far as the students are concerned, they would also find the atmosphere of a College and its association with a highly qualified staff an exhilarating experience. After all, the age break—16 plus—that separates High School students from those of the Higher Secondary classes would justify a partial release of these senior students from the straight-jacket of a school routine which, at that stage, begins to hamper the development of their personality.

I am glad that under the Commission's proposal, recourse to this alternative is kept an open question in the sense that it can be considered without disturbing the general structural pattern of the secondary system proposed by it. The basic points of that system are (i) the institution of an undifferentiated Secondary stage of 10

classes, (ii) the separation of the Secondary from the Higher Secondary stage (also without "streams") and (iii) the constitution of the latter into an independent self-sufficient unit. Whether this independent unit is tagged on to a school or constituted into a separate intermediate college or joined to an affiliated (degree) college as a preparatory stage may be kept open as a debatable point. The arguments presented in detail in the preceding paragraph point against the proposal to attach the Higher Secondary classes to schools and in favour of incorporating them into the collegiate system. It would be difficult to do so under the existing scheme because the Higher Secondary stage covers three years (classes IX to XI) and specialisation starts at class IX through its different parallel streams. If these classes are separated from the parent schools, the latter would be reduced to the status, more or less, of elementary schools. Rather, if the Upper Primary stage (as proposed by the Education Commission) ends with class VII, then class VIII would be a redundant stage. The Commission's proposal to abolish the streams will, of course, have to be judged on its own merits ; but if it is accepted, it would make it so much easier to consider afresh the question of where the Higher Secondary classes are to be located.

If the proposal to constitute the Higher Secondary classes into an independent unit and their transference to an intermediate college or degree college is favourably viewed, the chief hurdle would be the existing 11-class Higher Secondary schools. In Madhya Pradesh, for instance, all schools have been upgraded to 11-class schools. In other States, some of the schools have been upgraded while others continue as 10-class schools with one-year pre-University class in college. In Uttar Pradesh, none of the schools has been upgraded, that is, there are no Higher Secondary schools ; instead there are 2-year Intermediate Colleges. So also in Bombay. Those States where the schools have not been upgraded do not present any difficulty in regard to the question of transference of any classes to colleges for the simple reason that there are no classes to be transferred. The difficulty about class XI in the 11-class schools has to be faced. The Commission's proposal is to upgrade all schools to 12-class Higher Secondary schools and a big time-lag is allowed for such transformation. The difficulties of this proposal have been explained. These are serious and failure to tackle them would create chaos in a crucial field of education. Hence



the need for an alternative based on the principle that classes XI and XII should not go to schools. These might either be formed into an intermediate college or transferred to the existing degree colleges. The only way which would create the least disturbance is to extend the duration of the pre-University course to 2 years. In fact, this is what a very large section of teachers in West Bengal are wanting. Now, if these two classes are to form part of a college, what would happen to the 11-class higher secondary schools ? Do we have to downgrade them all to ten-year schools ? Yes, that would be the logical consequence of the proposal to transfer the Higher Secondary classes to the college. But what would happen to class XI ? Do we just abolish it ? We must remember that already large investments have been made in the construction of buildings, the purchase of apparatus and equipment, the expansion of libraries, and the appointment of qualified additional staff (most of whom hold confirmed posts consequent on the upgrading of these schools). State Governments have also paid out a substantial sum by way of grants-in-aid, both developmental and maintenance. Shall all this go down the drain and the surplus staff be left to fend for themselves in these days of mounting unemployment ?

IX

An Alternative Proposal

Now, these questions have to be faced if a satisfactory alternative based on the proposal to transfer classes XI-XII to the college is to be worked out. May I suggest that the 11-class schools should be retained as the terminating point of the *secondary* course ? Let us see what it means. It means adding one more class to the secondary course. In fact, those States which had accepted the scheme of the Mudaliar Commission are committed to the 11-class school idea. If the Higher Secondary classes with their streams (it is these which add to the cost) are taken away, the process of conversion would not be too difficult. The question of the total duration of education will, however, present a real difficulty. If entry to class I of the primary course is retained at 6 plus, the minimum age for the First Degree

will be 22 ($6+11+2+3$) instead of 20 ($6+10+1+3$ or $6+8+3+3$) as at present. This will mean a longer wait and higher expense which the average family in India, bent down with the sheer burden of making the two ends meet, cannot contemplate with equanimity.

Nevertheless, if it is deemed desirable to locate classes XI and XII in the colleges as a sort of preparatory course either for entry to the degree course or to a higher technical or vocational diploma course, recourse to either of these two alternatives will be unavoidable, namely, (1) to raise the age of graduation to 22, 2 years more than at present ; or (2) to put the age of entry to class I of the primary course at 5, and not 6, in which case the age of graduation, that is, upto the completion of the First Degree course will be 21, the same as under the Education Commission's scheme. It is true that in the case of the first proposal, a student would require one year more for graduation than under the Commission's scheme. It is also true that it would be difficult to enlist public support for this extra year for reasons already stated. But there are certain clear advantages which might be considered against the disadvantage of the loss of a year. There are, first of all, the advantages of attaching the higher secondary classes to a college which have already been explained in the preceding paragraph. A further point in favour of this proposal of a uniform eleven-year school course would be the accretion of one additional year (compared to the ten-class school) which, added to the primary stage, would make it one of eight years rather than seven as proposed by the Education Commission. The age-group of a primary student would, therefore, be 6-14 years. The Constitutional Directive of free and compulsory primary education is prescribed for this age-group ; these eight years also coincide with the period allotted to the Junior and Senior stages of Basic Education already accepted by the Government. It is also in conformity with Gandhiji's scheme as spelled out by the Zakir Husain Committee's Report (Wardha Scheme). This correspondence is lacking in both the Mudaliar Commission's scheme and the Education Commission's scheme, which presumably means that the Basic Education Scheme may have to be scrapped along with the existing structure of Secondary Education. It appears that there will be too many casualties if we are to plump for the scheme adumbrated by the Education Commission.

The second proposal is linked to the lowering of the

age of entry to the primary classes from 6 to 5 years. In this case, while the total span of secondary education would cover eleven years (5 to 16) and graduation would be at 21, the same as under the Education Commission's scheme, there might be some misgivings at the earlier start in view of the fact that in most of the countries the starting age for the primary classes is 6 + and that the Sadler, Radhakrishnan, Mudaliar and Kothari Commissions have all suggested the starting age to be 6. Besides, the age-group for the primary stage would, under this alternative, be 5-12 or 5-13 years. This would be subject to the same difficulty in regard to the equivalence of this period of primary education with the basic education scheme as had troubled the Mudaliar Commission. There is also the Constitutional Directive to be given effect to.

On a balancing of the advantages and the disadvantages, our choice, I submit, should fall on the first alternative. Summarising, the scheme works out as follows :—

(1)	Pre-primary	...	...	...	...	age 3-5
(2)	Primary	...	...	...	...	age 6-14
	(a) Lower primary	...	...	...	...	class I-IV
	(b) Higher primary	...	...	...	...	class V-VIII
(3)	Secondary	...	...	...	...	class IX-XI
	(age-group for Primary and Secondary—6-17)					
(4)	Class XII-XIII	...	...	...	...	age-group 17-19
	(Preparatory, Pre-University or Intermediate)					
(5)	Three-year Degree course	...	...	...	...	age-group 19-22

To lessen the period of wait, a further suggestion can be made. It is my opinion that the existing Pass Course of the Three-year Degree course can be well-covered in two years. It may therefore be suggested, as part of the proposed reorganization, to confine the Part I of the existing First Degree examination to the Pass course subjects only, including languages, while the Part II examination should be confined exclusively to the Honours Papers. Those who passed the Part I examination (in the pass subjects) would get the B.A. pass degree. They should, however, be eligible to appear at a special Honours examination in a subsequent year so as to qualify for admission to the Post-graduate classes.

In the proposed set-up, the syllabus of the preparatory two-year course may follow the pattern of the old intermediate course except that there might be one paper of English instead of three, one paper



on the regional language and one paper in Hindi or any other Indian or classical language. In addition, provision should be made for the teaching of "Moral and Spiritual Values" as suggested by the Education Commission. The syllabus for this subject should be very carefully framed and graded. Fortunately we have, in the recommendations of the Sriprakasa Committee and the Radhakrishnan Commission, as sound guide-lines for an acceptable syllabus of studies. In particular, we have to bear in mind that the Secular State, which we have accepted as our ideal, does not mean an anti-religious State. The Indian child should be taught to respect all the great religions of the world in their moral and spiritual contexts. For this we must seek the help of the best available teachers. They will be the most important force for the national integration of India.



CHAPTER XIII

TEACHER EDUCATION

The Teacher and the Child

I

Addressing an annual Conference of teachers in Bengal a few years ago, the author stated :

" Let us not forget, in spite all the stresses and strains of our daily existence, that education has a spiritual content, that in teaching a class I am transferring a part of my personality, a part of my spirit, to inspire and dwell in the minds of the young learners. Teaching is a great adventure of the spirit. The teacher and the taught form a grand co-partnership in this adventure. It is a common experience that the young pupil makes a hero of his revered teacher : he is almost deified. This gives the clue to the attitude of mind that inspired our great sages in the past to define the relations between the *guru* and his disciple. The *Taittiriya Upanishad* gives us a fine discourse on the relations of the preceptor and the disciple which I would love to see inscribed on the walls of every school." ¹

It was not merely a piece of peroration. It is author's sincere belief that all our efforts to " educate " the teacher would fail if he (the teacher) did not possess the innate capacity to establish a rapport between his own and the pupil's mind, to be able to hold his pupil's interest and attention all the time he is teaching, by the manner of his speech, by his mastery of the subject under discourse, by the images that he can project on the mental retina of his ward, by his skill in guiding the learner along a journey, with purposeful steps, over an uncharted land of discovery of things unknown to the child, without haste or hurry. He will take the learner along with him to the discovery, for example, of a new meaning in a familiar word, of a new phrase, of a new idea, of a new angle of vision ; to the unravelling of the wonders of the world of matter, so familiar and yet so strange, and the mysteries of the world of life, so intimate and yet so challenging ; to watch the panorama of many lands and many peoples as they are made to pass before the mind's eye of the child ; to be thrilled at the magic

¹ Thirty-second annual session of the All-Bengal Teachers' Association : Presidential address.



of numbers, the art forms of geometrical lines, the amazing mechanism of the human body and the wonderful powers of the human mind : the music of poetry as well as of the performing arts ; to take up the challenge of doing things, from a paper boat to a radio-receiving set and of achieving a target whether in school athletics or in the examination hall ; or to develop the capacity of making friends and participate in the joy and happiness of healthy companionship ; of understanding how the good fights with the evil and how it ultimately wins ; and, finally, to share the feeling that behind all this there is a Divine Power to whom we are all like children whom He protects and guides along the paths of wisdom and truth. Teaching, in other words, is not an imposition from the outside but a creative fellowship between the teacher and the taught in mental and intellectual exploration. One who is going to be a teacher should himself face a rigorous test of initiation, should be inspired by the lives and teachings of the great educators, should know how a subject is to be presented in a form that should be attractive and rivet the pupil's interest ; and so to excite his curiosity in the study of books, even to the extent of developing an urge for self-teaching, to know things and to do things by himself, with a little help and guidance when and where necessary. In other words, the teacher must himself have a love of the subject he is going to teach and he should be trained into the psychology of the child, into the technique of training his senses and guiding his imagination. Thus, a natural attachment to the subject of study and a love of children are the *sine qua non* of a successful teacher. A teacher, before he takes up the profession of teaching must ask himself whether he has these two pre-requisites.

The child is, of course, the centre of study in all basic educational programmes. Without going into the intricacies of educational psychology to which a brief reference will be made in the next section, I may, in a general way, point to some of the well-known characteristics of child behaviour as distinct from adult behaviour which makes the art of educating the child such an interesting and absorbing affair. The child has a natural and compelling curiosity which virtually knows no limits. It is this curiosity which starts the educational process for the child ; it is also the motivating force of self-teaching. The teacher, here, has a wonderful opportunity to be friends with the child, to whet his appetite for learning yet more



and then to introduce him to formal learning. This will be a test for his (the teacher's) patience and a sympathetic understanding of the child's insatiable desire to know more. Secondly, the child loves, at least initially, to use his senses more than his intellect. Knowledge proceeds from the concrete to the abstract, from the particular to the general. The infant puts out its hand to grab every object that comes its way and, grabbing it, tries immediately to put it into its mouth, for to see and then to taste it is the only means of knowledge and its first experiment with knowledge is necessarily with food. When a little grown up, he would love to hear a lullaby, to see a picture, to be attracted by vivid colours, and then, further growing up, he would break open a toy he is paying with, because he is not satisfied with using his hands only but wants to know : that is, perhaps, his first attempt to acquire a skill that is later employed in making a paper boat or, still later, a radio-set. Thirdly, the child has a very vivid imagination, so vivid that he almost takes it for reality. So powerful is this imagination that he can be said to live in a world of his own imagination where even trivial things assume a personality and importance. This, later on, leads to the birth of poetry and of the novel, the theatre and the cinema. This vividness of the child's imagination may be a little baffling, even occasionally exasperating to the grown-ups who had long passed their own childhood days, but in the hands of the gifted teacher it offers a fertile field for new experiments in educational theory and practice. Then, again, the very flexibility of the child's mind makes teaching a pleasure and a responsibility. The same can be said of the child's credulity. I have known of children remonstrating with their parents because their views were opposed to their teacher's with the very weighty objection : "No, you are wrong, daddy, for my teacher said so." Finally, we must realise that children all over the world have a universal nature. This universality, unless it is artificially disturbed or regulated, does not know of differences of colour, race, creed or any of those distinctions created by the adult world. It is up to the teacher to be alive to this fact and lead this democratic world of children to the realisation of the basic unity of all mankind. All this imposes a heavy responsibility, moral and intellectual, on the teacher. A good teacher must get on to the right side of children. He should, in short, learn the art of being a child with the children.



At the same time he must be conscious of the child's innate desire to grow—he often plays the adult by imitating adult ways—and not do anything that may hinder this growth. It is for the teacher primarily to help this transition from one critical phase of life to another, from childhood to adolescence, from adolescence to youth, and from the youth to adulthood; from the nursery school, that is, to the University.

This sets the context of a satisfactory system of teacher education and underlines its importance in a developing society. A good student is, by and large, the product of good teaching. There are, no doubt, born teachers, but good teaching is also an art and a technique which has to be understood and cultivated. A well-laid system of national education must be based on a proper appreciation of this fact.

II

The Child Mind

In the preceding section an attempt was made to indicate how the ideal teacher sets about his task. In fact, a teacher's education can only rationalise our expectations but ultimately the problem is reduced to the twin requirements of understanding the subject (to be taught) and understanding the child. The first of these is not merely learning a subject but learning it the right way. The right way in this case is the way that would be helpful to the student preparing to be a teacher to teach the subject. Thus a good scholar will not necessarily be a good teacher. The method of teaching a subject has, therefore, been made a part of the teachers' training courses. Secondly, to understand the mind of the child, a teacher has to be a psychologist. One has to be a lover of childhood if one wants to be a good teacher. A formal course of instruction must be complementary to this understanding. The training may provide a course in child psychology, or in a more expanded form, educational psychology, which will enable the student-teacher to have a better appreciation of the factors of a situation with which he has to deal. A child, for instance, is easily swayed by emotions. It takes a long



process to train our emotions and even then we may not succeed. I am not here referring to the "problem child" as such who may probably require psychiatric treatment, but of the normal child who is much more prone to emotions than the adult, and who are less amenable to that mental discipline which an experienced adult can be expected to bring to bear upon a situation. These emotions will frequently challenge a teacher's understanding of a situation or his capacity to deal with the same.

By way of illustration, let us take the two commonest, and the most typical, emotions to which a child is subject, the failure to understand which may retard the teacher's work. These are Anger and Fear.

We take anger first. Anger in a child (or in an adolescent) usually arises when there is interference with its natural inclinations or with activities in which he is interested. The interference may come from fellow human beings, as for example, when the child is forced by his elders to abstain from an activity or from satisfying his inclinations. He may also be angry when he finds obstruction in his path which thwarts his progress and he fails to remove it (the obstacle). He may, further, be angry at his own inability to do a thing which he has resolved to do. In all these cases anger is due to frustration. More relevant examples are : a child wants to play, but the teacher gives him a task which must be finished before he is allowed to play. Anger may also be caused by jealousy, for instance, when the teacher shows favour to another child with whom the other one is not on good terms. Or, anger may seize a child who is hungry but is called upon to do something which can as well be done after he has had some food, or which, because of his low physical condition, he is not inclined to do. Cumulative irritations also cause anger, as for example, when a child is compelled to do something over and over again without visible improvement in performance which consequently weakens his will to do better. Or, take this case. A child, for no fault of his, say, because he had to stand in a queue before a ration shop, he is late for school ; already annoyed, he is scolded by the teacher who, of course, does it to enforce a rule without caring to note *why* he is late ; the child could have explained, but having been already annoyed, he could not help giving a curt reply to the teacher. The teacher, at this show of impertinence, is further enraged and gives the child a

sound whacking. It is easy to see that this method, instead of fulfilling its objective as a disciplinary measure, merely makes the child sullen, which may cause a permanent damage to his relations with the teacher or he may be, in uncontrollable passion, led to do other, extremely silly, things. What is more, the child loses faith in justice. In some cases anger may lead the child on to the path of delinquency. If the child's frustration, or a sense of jealousy, or the feeling of being constantly left out, or of the teacher being persistently unfair to him, goes too far, he is likely to develop a spirit of disobedience or indiscipline, ultimately resulting in extreme forms of punishment. Then he is lost to society, and set very definitely on the path to criminality. Of course, anger, it must be noted, does not always necessarily lead to tragic consequences. It may, indeed, have the opposite effect of compelling the boy to shed his inertia or complacency and correct his incompetence. However, having regard to the emotional nature of the child's mind, such a constructive outcome would rather be an exception than a normal expectation. All this shows that the usual adult approach in dealing with an angry child, either indulgence at one extreme or over-strictness at the other has to be replaced by a more rational or scientific approach. The one question that is to be answered in all such cases is whether the punishment is going to fulfil its objective and whether the objective is consistent with the developmental needs of the child considered as a unique personality. For punishment may be simply repressive and start a vicious circle of emotional reactions. Sometimes the anger, particularly of a normally good-natured boy, should be allowed to work itself off and, then, when tempers have been calmed, the teacher may investigate the cause of the anger. If the boy is at fault, it would be possible in such cases to talk him into identifying his own fault (no 'brain-washing', please). If an angry boy is faced by a still more angry teacher, it would be better if the teacher himself curbs his own wrath so as to be better able to appreciate the real situation.

The other emotion, fear, is also a product of many causes. It may range from mere apprehension to a state of panic. Generally speaking, it is the result of the supposed incapacity of a person to deal with a situation which is, in consequence, recognised as dangerous. Sometimes fear may be due to a sudden or intense stimulus from any sense modality as, for instance, when suddenly an air-



raided siren begins to scream or there is a flash of lightning followed by a peal of thunder. A sudden happening which cannot be reasonably explained causes fear. A child's fears are usually a response to concrete happenings in his immediate neighbourhood. Much of this fear is caused by imaginary dangers. An original shocking experience, however, may make the victim liable to recurring fear which even in later years he may fail to outgrow. Ghost stories, especially, if told with lurid details, during the childhood of a person, a period when the imaginary is readily mistaken for the real thing, generate a fear which may be fixed in the subconscious mind even when the child has grown into an adult. There is, however, the fear which, while leaving no apparent after-effects, may influence human behaviour in later years in complex ways. A child which may have witnessed a railway accident may in later life be startled by any rumbling sound or by any sharp whistle. A single frightening experience may have many complex after-effects. The example of the adults, not to speak of his own parents or near relations, may also affect a child.

Now, the causes of fear are too numerous and complex to be discussed in detail. But the point that concerns us here is the kind of fear that may adversely affect the relations between the pupil and the teacher. For example, the teacher may like to play upon the fear of a child to enforce discipline. 'Spare the rod and spoil the child' used to be a very familiar slogan in the older days. The medieval schools of England used to indulge in unspeakable brutalities. B. A. Howard, Headmaster of Addey and Stanhope School, London, has written of the great regard for this kind of enforcing discipline cherished by a certain schoolmaster "who boasted that he had delivered over nine hundred thousand blows in the course of his career, and whose nightly petition was that the Lord would spare him until he had got the total into seven figures."² Such treatment merely brutalises the child and probably, as a reaction, sets him on the path of a criminal. Fortunately, such an attitude towards discipline is now not regarded as a normal make-up of a teacher nor prescribed in any of the courses for the training of teachers. Of course, like anger,

² B. A. Howard : *The Mixed School*, p. 19.

fear also has some social value. Fear in the days of childhood is Nature's insurance against harm. Adults sometimes instil fear into the minds of their little wards to teach them the virtues of caution. Again, there is also the peculiar psychology of fear which releases a corresponding urge to overcome it. On the other hand, a childish inclination to show off (to fellow children) in a spirit of bravado underlines his failure to recognise a danger. In other words, fear as a recognition of a potentially dangerous situation is a valuable safeguard against precipitous exploits. All this shows that fear, like anger, is a complex emotion and that there is no single remedy, or even remedies, by which fear can be completely eliminated from the human breast. Nor is it possible to anticipate or provide against all the likely situations that may create a disposition towards fear. Verbal reassurances from elders who ought to know may allay apprehension. Where lack of understanding is a cause of fear, it may be met by a rational explanation of the phenomenon that has caused the fear. But since the child's reasoning faculty is not yet fully developed, a mere attempt to explain away fears is not very effective. If, however, an individual is encouraged and helped to face a situation which is the cause of fear or to devise counter-measures against an anticipated misfortune, the fear will vanish in proportion as self-confidence is increased. Then again, there is the method of "graded approach" by which a person is introduced to a new situation by degrees instead of precipitously as when a child is taught to walk, or an adult sheds his "stage-fright". The example of other children, or even adults, in meeting unfamiliar situations, may gradually create self-confidence in a child whose fears may be derived from a sense of loneliness or helplessness. The teacher may contrive play-situations through which children may be relieved of their fears of a bogey. The best remedy seems, however, to be the personal example of the teacher himself or that of other children of the same age-group.

Apart from the emotions of anger or fear, there are other important emotions which influence child life. Children, for instance, have a highly developed sense of pleasure. Psychologists tell us that the young child gets pleasure from sheer activity. His natural abundance of energy thus finds satisfaction. We have noticed how a child, let free seldom walks ; what he does is to run at varying speeds or alternate walking with running. An impromptu or unrehearsed dance or pirouetting



comes natural to a developing child without any particular reason. As he grows a little older, he derives pleasure in doing what in early years might have baffled him or in doing things that gives him a sense of importance. He is glad to run errands for his mother, his elder sister or brother, or to do odd jobs for the teacher. His play life thus receives added significance as he grows. The form of pleasure and the things that give pleasure keep on changing with age. Adventures which attracted a child at an early age become obsolete with the opportunities of new experience looming large. This craving for pleasure through activity may be turned into an educational asset. Activity programmes in schools have to be arranged accordingly and the teacher's understanding of the child enables him to make a constructive contribution to assist the child through well-devised activity programmes. These could even be co-ordinated with achievement tests. Such tests keep a child from mischief for, as it is in the nature of a boy to find an out-let for his surplus energy, a tendency towards mischief is too often the result of a vacuum. Sometimes a growing child who fails to earn recognition or appreciation through his regular activity will seek compensation by forcing such recognition by indulging in mischief. In our Colleges a good deal of the agitational programmes of the students' unions arise out of this perverted desire to force recognition or attract notice. In fact, in its application to the broader frame-work of school life, a judicious distribution of praise is known to have an incentive effect. In a recent study made by a group of 120 teachers, they unanimously agreed with a policy of "Using praise more often than rebuke or reprimand as an incentive in school work."² Again, the natural imitativeness of the child and the young adolescent may also be converted into an educational asset by an intelligent and resourceful teacher.

This necessarily brief discussion is not intended to be a psychological exercise but to underline some of the implications of the second of the two conditions predicated of the good teacher, namely, understanding the mind of the child.

² From an unpublished study by M.F. Meigs, Teachers' College, Columbia University.



III

Learning a Subject

As regards the other desideratum, namely, learning a subject the right way, reference has already been made to the "method" papers for the Teachers' Training Courses. Method refers to the means of stimulating and guiding learning. I have also referred to the self-teaching activities of the child. Specialists also tell us that learning is a self-active process. In other words, to place excessive emphasis on instruction which allows little freedom to the learner is bound to defeat its purpose. The ineffectiveness of this procedure is seen in the failure of most of our college teachers whose overmuch dependence on the general lecture method makes no impression on the minds of the learners who, as a last resort, turn to cram books or to cooked up questions and answers. In fact, our students are apt to suffer from over-lecturing. This is particularly true of the students of the humanities. Science students at least have an escape in laboratory work.

Learning, properly conceived, is not exhausted in the learner's mastery of a subject in the academic sense. As the psychologist would point out, our attitudes, values, interests and motives are dependent upon training and experience. The environment in its totality plays a great part in this process. It generates the demands and sets, as it were, the goals. The learner, in reaching out towards these goals, is motivated by an urge for achievement. Learning is, therefore, designed to develop interests, aptitudes and skills. Indeed, interests are always correlated to objects. All these are created by the environment in which the child is placed. The environment here means, as already stated, total environment. So, as J. E. Anderson has pointed out, "one of the most important functions of the teacher is that of setting the stage for the child's interests by her (the teacher's) own enthusiasms, spontaneity and personal interests in activities and materials". Merely assigning tasks and correcting home-work forms only a half, and the lesser half at that, of the educative process. Here comes the need to appreciate the real socio-logical value of extra-curricular activities. These are linked to, if



they do not themselves constitute, the school environment, the socializing influence of which is one of the most significant aspects of the educative process. Hence the teacher in charge may help in creating a variety of constructive social situations which will govern the students' activity programmes. These programmes, responding to multiple-environment demands, will provide for the play of both competitive and co-operative forces. Learning has accordingly been defined as "the progressive change in behaviour which is associated, on the one hand, with successive presentations of a situation, and, on the other, with repeated efforts of the individual to react to it effectively". It is also thought of as "the acquisition of ways of satisfying motives or of attaining goals". It is actually a process, not a product ; it is a developmental process. Finally motivation is also the *sine qua non* of learning.

All these statements have extensive psychological implications which can best be brought out by the study of concrete situations, or by relating it to experience. It is to be understood that, in all this, the teacher is the central figure, the guide-line. He must constantly bear in mind that what the child learns depends to a great degree on the nature of the environment, particularly, the school environment, and the character of experience. This approach to learning underlines the difference between the traditional approach and the new school that takes experience and environment as the basic factors. Our traditional *pāthśālās*, for example, believed in the repetitive mode of learning. The modern educator, however, would point out that "purely repetitive methods of learning may actually foster undesirable forms of response which can be surmounted only with great difficulty". I am not sure if I can fully agree with this view. A gang of workers when they rhythmically repeat a certain line or certain words as they lift a heavy log or the palanquin bearers when they carry their burden to the beat of their improvised rhyme or the women roof-beaters when they sing to the beat do not merely try to lighten their burden ; it is a part of the process of learning to do a job and do it well. So when the head boy gives the lead and the other boys repeat (say, the mathematical tables) in the village primary school, it is a process of learning which is much quicker than if each of the boys in the row made a solo effort. So again when a boy is asked by his master to spell out a word ten times (or



write it ten times in his copy book) the word is fixed in his memory through the medium of the sound or the image of the written word. Be that as it may, it is no doubt a significant contribution to educational thought to place due emphasis on the developmental nature of learning through guidance and through creating constructive situations calling for appropriate student response.

IV

Curriculum

Reference has been made in the previous section to the fact that the teacher is the central figure, the guide-line, as it were, in the educational system, particularly in the education of the child. We shall now address ourselves to the question : *What makes a good teacher ?*

It may be said that teachers are born, not made. A poet is also born, not made. That does not mean that there is no science of poetry, no technique of writing poems or of poetic criticism, the laws of verse or of versification. Painters are also born, not made. That does not mean that he will not, to be a good painter, learn the technical side of painting, its colour composition, or the art of mixing colours, manipulation of lines, reflection of light and shade, preparation of the surface or the canvas, and so on. A good teacher will, no doubt, have certain innate capacities or abilities. But these will not go far unless he picks up the teaching skill, a thorough grounding in the basic knowledge of, and skill in, handling the subject he is going to teach, together with an understanding of child psychology, if he has to make an intelligent use of his natural ability. Otherwise there will be a risk of his natural talents being misdirected or even wasted. The point would be perfectly clear if we turn to the curriculum of a teachers' college.

The curriculum includes general subjects, professional subjects and special subjects. A few years ago, the XXth International Conference on Public Education convened jointly by UNESCO and the International Bureau of Education, Geneva, carried out a study on the training of primary teacher training staff together with a study



of the skills and qualifications demanded of the staff of teacher training schools and colleges. A detailed analysis of the subjects included in the curricula of teacher training establishments of some 65 countries showed the large range of subjects which the student-teachers have to study according to the curricula prescribed for the training courses. The range of subjects indicates a certain philosophy of education. In the first place, the subjects selected are intended to provide the teacher with a comprehensive, if not complete, equipment, both in the academic and professional senses. Secondly, the governing idea is that the prospective teacher must learn the content of the usual school subjects and also the method of passing on this knowledge to the children. In some countries, social sciences (economics, politics, civics, sociology) are included in the list of general subjects to provide education with a social content and purpose. Subjects of professional interest include "Method" subjects together with a special field for training in arts and crafts which not only train the senses but give a necessary vocational bias to education. Modern educational opinion is not, however, happy with this demarcation of the curriculum into "General" and "Professional". Thus, in England, the Joint Standing Committee of the Training College Association and the Council of Principals in its Memorandum on the "Training of Teachers" (1937) observed :

"The course on Principles of Education has become the substructure of the whole training college fabric. Through this course, the students come to the realisation of the aims which will inform all their work in school and they learn something of the nature of the children they will teach and of their own nature so that they can understand the wisest ways of approaching their goals. These psychological principles they will apply in the teaching of all subjects to the children" (pp. 20-21).

Let us now turn, for illustration, to the curriculum of Teachers' Colleges in the U.S.A. There we find the following subjects in the teachers' training courses :—

<i>General</i> :	.. English, Foreign Languages, Philosophy, History, Geography, Mathematics, Science (Biology, Chemistry, Physics), Economics, Political Science, Sociology.
<i>Professional</i>	.. Education, History and Philosophy of Education, Teaching Methods and Materials, Curriculum Construction, Psychology, Educational Psychology.
<i>Special</i> ..	.. Health and Physical Education, Fine and Applied Arts, Home Economics, Music.

Or, in the case of U.S.S.R. :

(a) *Establishment at the Secondary Level—*

<i>General</i> ..	Mother tongue, Russian Literature, Logic, General Geography, Geography of the U.S.S.R., Modern History, National History, Soviet Communist Party History, Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Mineralogy, Natural Science.
<i>Professional</i> ..	Education, History of Education, Psychology, School Health, Methods of (primary) Class Teaching, Children's Literature, Practice Teaching.
<i>Special</i> ..	Physical Culture, Drawing, Practical Workshop and Agricultural Skills, Singing and Music.

(b) *Establishment at higher levels—*

<i>General</i> ..	Russian, Theory of Arithmetic.
<i>Professional</i> ..	Education, History of Education, School Health, Children's Literature, Child Psychology, Methods of (primary) Class Teaching, Practice Teaching (various forms of training courses).
<i>Special</i> ..	Practical Workshop and Agricultural Schools.

Similarly, in the cases of other countries, the curriculum of the teachers' training establishments carries a large list of subjects of academic and professional interest and a special field for developing skills. Of course, the division between general and professional subjects is not a rigid one, for subjects which are regarded as academic or general can be studied in their professional aspect. Again, when a good teacher is teaching what is called a general subject, his teaching, on account of his professional competence, may also be regarded as an illustration of a method in teaching that subject. On the other hand, since a teacher may be supposed to have already acquired some competence in many of the fields included in the list of "General Subjects", the classification of such subjects may be revised to avoid unnecessary duplication or repetition.

The question of the duration of the course is also another factor to be considered. Nearly all European countries give their teachers a course extending over 3 years while some allow even 4 years. In India, all the subjects included in the course are treated professionally. The course (as in West Bengal) extends over less than a year inclusive of practice teaching. It is clear that the duration of the course is adjusted to local (or national) needs and requirements. Thus the Soviet System includes a course on "National History" and another on the Soviet Communist Party History. The same principle is evident in the varying minimum qualifications required of the pros-



pactive students for admission to the different types of courses, not only from the point of view of the duration of the courses but the purpose for which they are meant. The Joint Standing Committee of the Training College Association and the Council of Principals in its Memorandum (already referred to) mentions the following seven types of courses,⁴ viz.,—

- (1) One Year—These courses may be taken by Graduates and lead to a Teaching Certificate or a Teaching Diploma or to the Physical Training Diploma of the Carnegie College or by holders of the Froebel Certificate in preparation for a Teaching Certificate.
- (2) Two Years—Leading to a Certificate for intending teachers in Nursery Schools, Infant Schools, Junior and Senior Elementary Schools, and Central Schools, or to a Diploma in Domestic Science.
- (3) Two Years, plus a Third Year in one specific subject taken immediately after the Two-year course, for intending teachers in Elementary and Central Schools.
- (4) Two Years, plus a deferred Third Year course in one specific subject—for intending teachers in Elementary and Central Schools.
- (5) Three Years—This may lead to the Teachers' Certificate of the N.F.U., a Diploma in Physical Training for Women, a Diploma in Domestic Science, a Nursery School Diploma or Degree and a teaching certificate.
- (6) Four Years—This is in reality a Three-Year Course leading to a degree, followed by a year's post-graduate professional training leading to a teaching certificate and/or diploma.
- (7) Five Years—Students of the R.C.A. take a four-year course in Fine Art, followed by a one-year course which includes professional training and a continuation of the work in Fine Art. This course leads to the Art Teacher's Diploma. Some Domestic Science students take a four-year course leading to a degree in Domestic Science, followed by a year's course leading to a Diploma in Education.

The Third Year Courses mentioned in (3) and (4) above are available in Nursery School Work, Art, Craft, Music, Physical Training, Mathematics, Physical Science, Domestic Science, French, Biology, Geography, Divinity and a Rural Course.

V

The Making of a Teacher

The Memorandum of the Joint Standing Committee is also useful as a competent exposition of the different steps in the making of a teacher. Society, after all, does not possess a touchstone by which

* Memorandum (1937), pp. 11-12.



it can immediately identify a "born teacher". So it should be justified in laying down certain rigorous tests of fitness for a training course for teachers.

The first point to consider is the pre-education of the teacher candidates. A basic essential is a good general education. This is given in the secondary schools. Where the schools pursue a well-balanced curriculum, a student who has the teaching profession in view, will be well-equipped with the necessary ground-work in common with the students who want to prepare themselves for other callings. "It is in a wise balance of subjects, and in the development of the power of reflective thought", the Memorandum states, "that the Secondary Schools can best meet the needs of the Training Colleges". The Memorandum recommends the inclusion of the following subjects in particular: music, art and craft, physical education, speech training, voice production and (English) literature "of a non-examination type".

The Memorandum also recommends that before the student begins his professional training as a teacher, he should have had some preliminary experience in teaching practice. After considering and rejecting various alternatives such as the teacher-pupil system or the requirement that candidates should go into the schools for a short period (a month or a fortnight) before being given grants or loans towards training, the Memorandum comes to the conclusion that "actual teaching is not the most suitable form of preliminary experience, that it is dangerous to expect students to teach before they have been trained". What is essential, it says, is that candidates "should have more contact with children outside the class room in natural and social conditions". This could be done through school clinics, play-centres, settlements, orphanages, school visits, Sunday schools, youth organizations such as Scouts and Guides, etc.

Conditions for admission to the Training Colleges vary. The minimum qualification for all types of training, except post-graduate, is the school certificate but some Colleges insist on some additional qualifications such as Matriculation, four or five "credits" including English, proficiency in Physical Training, Art, Handwork, Music, etc. Besides these, considerable value is given to the personal qualities of the candidates including social and athletic abilities, positions of authority in the school such as prefects or house captains



and distinction in field sports, games, etc. As regards the University Training Departments and colleges providing post-graduate training, most of the Departments require the Higher School Certificate, and a few others the Matriculation, as the minimum qualification for entry. The H.S. Certificate generally enables a candidate to enter at once for an Honours Course for a degree whereas Matriculation as a rule only admits of a pass degree being taken in the three years for which grants can be earned. Graduates of approved Universities are accepted in limited numbers for one year of professional training. In all cases, applicants are interviewed and references taken up.

What about the teachers of the student-teachers, that is, the teaching staff of the teachers' training establishments ? From the available data, it seems that there is no special arrangements for the training of such staff. According to the UNESCO study, referred to above, the system of appointment of staff is to choose those who seem best qualified for this work, either graduates or holding similar qualifications. Those who are concerned with specifically professional subjects often possess post-graduate qualifications in child psychology, or some other educational subject, and many of them have done research or attended special courses. Thus, whether the teachers' training establishments aim at producing trained teachers for secondary or for primary schools, the staff is, generally speaking, "highly qualified, both by their academic attainments and their educational experience". These teachers (of the training establishments) draw up their own courses of study to correspond to their specific needs, that is, to their specific fields of interest. There are, however, certain courses which are beginning to be regarded as specially valuable and these are provided by several University Institutes of Education, e.g., those of London, Birmingham, Leeds and Manchester. These courses usually last for one or two years and lead to a diploma (which can also be obtained by part-time study spread over a longer period). The point, of course, remains that a separate or specialised course of training has not yet been considered necessary for this class of teachers. After all, they are all supposed to be competent people, and usually teach in their special fields. Moreover, they face a class, not of children fresh from home, but keen and eager students who have reached a certain maturity.



VI

"In-Service" Training

Apart from the regular instruction received by these student-teachers in the teacher training establishments, the need still remains for in-service training. This may be at the post-certificate or post-graduate level. In a country, like India, where a large number of teachers are yet untrained, the need for a speedy solution of the problem may be met through a short or condensed course of training. Refresher courses will also be useful. These courses may be taken after a period of teaching for keeping abreast of current developments in educational thinking, of new ideas and experiments, of new problems clamouring for attention, as well as for exchange of ideas and experiences within the profession itself. Developments in theory bring changes in practice. Education being a dynamic process, and being now recognised as a distinct academic discipline with a philosophy of its own, it is still in a process of evolution, with tradition coming to terms with new experience. Inconsistencies have developed which is but natural because of the challenging task we have to face of reconciling the needs of the situation with the claims and resources of the community. A certain amount of sophistication has also entered into educational planning which makes it doubly necessary for the teachers to bring their knowledge up to the requisite standard. A teacher's professional life may last for 40 years, even more ; and, in the words of the Memorandum of the Joint Standing Committee, referred to above "far more attention must be given to the renewal, the re-invigoration, the refreshment of teachers during those forty years". The in-service courses may also include those meant for teachers of outstanding merit or capacities and may well be a preparation for those about to undertake special responsibilities.

These Refresher Courses may be undertaken by the existing Training Colleges and/or Departments or by other Educational Authorities, and adequately subsidised. Another proposal that has caught the fancy of educators is the scheme of "Summer Institutes". As the University Grants Commission in India which recently



organized a number of very successful Summer Institutes for school teachers explains :

"The Summer Institutes provide a review of basic principles in the scientific field from a modern standpoint. They discuss recent advances in the subject. They lay emphasis on practical laboratory work and lecture-demonstrations and provide an opportunity for teachers to discuss their problems with fellow teachers Through the programme of Summer Institutes, Colleges, Universities and Schools are encouraged to establish new courses and curricula aimed at meeting present-day needs."

These Institutes are intended to establish channels of communication between schools and universities ; to improve the subject-matter competence of participating teachers by acquainting them with recent developments in their subjects ; to enable teachers to develop a better understanding of the basic concepts in their fields of specialisation ; to strengthen the capacity of teachers for motivating able students to develop an aptitude for research ; to stimulate interest in teachers by bringing them into contact with eminent men in the field of their study ; and to enable teachers to exchange views with their colleagues in the profession and thus promote a greater understanding and appreciation of each other's teaching problems. These Institutes are organized under the auspices of the Universities of the region where the camp is held and usually secure the participation of distinguished collaborators even from distant countries. The success of this experiment, if its impact is to be retained, must of course be supplemented by follow-up programmes.

Apart from the Summer Institutes which are a desirable experiment, from the professional as well as the pupil's point of view, specially beneficial to the teachers of science, there are other devices such as the workshop, seminars, conferences etc. which may be used with advantage for in-service education. Such in-service education must necessarily centre on living issues which an alert teacher should readily recognize as they arise. The Teachers' College itself should be concerned with organising in-service education, for its objective, as already noted in connection with the device of Summer Institutes, covers more than the individual teacher's own difficulties. Similarly, the College can perform a useful function in regard to arranging for programmes of pre-service education.

*The Indian Case*

Teacher education in India is of recent origin. The number of Training Colleges listed in Appendix F of the Indian Universities (Radhakrishnan) Commission, 1948, was 41 for all India. On the basis of the information supplied by 27 of these, the Commission found that the Colleges could offer only 482 places in all against 1,394 applicants. The persistently increasing demand for teacher education is shown by the fact that while in 1926, there were 278 applicants for teachers' training courses, the number increased to 1,394 in 1936, whereas during this period (on the basis of the 27 colleges which supplied information) the number of seats available increased from 152 to 482, that is to say, while the number of applicants for seats increased by a little over five times, the number of seats increased by a little over three times. For instance, in the David Hare Training College in Calcutta, in 1936, out of 400 applicants only 101 could be taken in. In the Teachers' College, Mysore, only 41 applicants out of 141 succeeded in getting admission. One of the oldest teachers' colleges in India, if not the oldest, the Teachers' Training College at Saidapet, (established 1886), the number of seats doubled during 1926-1936 but still a large number of applicants had to be refused. One result of this has been that only a small percentage of our secondary schools is served by trained teachers. In West Bengal, Calcutta University offers the Bachelor of Teaching (B.T.) degree after a course lasting less than a year at the University Training College or other colleges affiliated in this course. Only those who have taken a degree in Arts, Science or Commerce are eligible for admission to these Colleges. Candidates who have passed the L.T. examination are also eligible to take the B.T. examination without having to study in a college affiliated for the purpose ; while candidates who had passed the Teachers' Training Certificate examination and served as a teacher in a recognized school are also similarly exempted from study in a college for the B.T. degree, provided that he has graduated with Honours in B.A. or B.Sc. or passed the B.Com. examination in Class I or passed the M.A. or M.Sc. examination, and also that he has passed the T.T. Certificate examination in the



First Class. Both the L.T. and the T.T. Certificate courses are of shorter duration than the B.T., and the course content is also relatively smaller. It is significant to notice that neither of these courses includes any academic or " general " subject (except an Essay and Composition paper in one of the prescribed modern Indian languages, or in English for those whose mother-tongue is a language other than those prescribed, for the B.T. candidates, and English Composition for the L.T. candidates), all the course subjects being of professional interest or " Method " subjects. While this omission to include general subjects in the B.T. course where the students are all graduates in one or more such subjects is understandable, it is less understandable in the case of the other two junior courses where the candidates are undergraduates.

We have to take note of the fact that there is no bar to the appointment of untrained teachers in any of the schools, except that in schools receiving Government aid, a certain number of teachers must be trained. Another stipulation is that untrained graduate teachers will be appointed on fixed pay and will not be eligible for the approved scales of pay until they get their B.T. degree. As regards admission to the B.T. course, while serving teachers on deputation (whose pay is borne by the Government) and those holding the Master's degree are more or less readily admitted, others have to face a selection test, usually through an interview. The situation has, of course, greatly improved during the last 20 years. According to the Report of the University Grants Commission for 1962-63, the total number of colleges affiliated in Education was 146 for the whole of India. In addition to these there were 51 other colleges which had facilities for teachers' training. These, together with the teachers' training departments of Universities, would raise the total of teachers' training centres to 210 for the whole country. The total number of teachers serving in secondary schools (including Senior basic, post-basic and secondary classes) was nearly 7,00,000 for all India in 1961-62. If we add nearly 8 lakhs of teachers who are employed in primary schools (including junior basic schools), it will be possible to have an idea of the gigantic problem of supplying trained teachers for teaching these students. Efforts are, of course, being made to augment the output of trained teachers as the figures given in the next page will show.

The figures, as quoted in the Reference Annual *India*, show that the total number of training schools estimated for 1965-66 was 1,424 (compared to 782 in 1950-51) and of training colleges was 312 (compared to 53 in 1950-51). The percentage of trained teachers for the different categories of schools was calculated as follows :

*No. of Schools and percentage of teachers
[1950-51 to 1965-66 (target)]*

- (a) Primary including Junior Basic Schools
- (b) Middle Schools including Senior Basic Schools
- (c) High/Higer Secondary Schools

Year	No. of Schools			Percentage of trained teachers	
	—	—	—	—	—
1950-51	(a)	2,09,671	..	..	58.8
	(b)	13,596	..	..	53.3
	(c)	7,288	..	..	53.8
1965-66	(a)	4,15,000	..	..	75.0
	(b)	57,700	..	..	75.0
	(c)	21,800	..	..	75.0

The increase in the total number of teachers in the Primary (including Junior Basic) schools and in the Secondary (including Senior Basic and Post-Basic) schools during the decade from 1951-61 is shown below :

No. of teachers in the Primary and the Secondary Schools

	Primary Schools	Secondary Schools
1950-51	..	5,37,918
1960-61	..	7,41,382

These figures, however, show large inter-State variations. Thus, according to the figures of the Education Commission, the percentage of trained teachers at the secondary stage varies between 18 per cent. in Assam and 96 per cent. in the Punjab (35.6 per cent. in West Bengal). The position as it is likely to develop from 1950-51 to 1965-66, assuming that the targets fixed for the Third



Five-Year Plan are reached, is shown in the following table on the basis of age groups :

*Achievements and Targets
(in lakhs)*

		1950-51	1960-61	1965-66
No. of pupils in classes I to V		1,92	3,50	4,96
Percentage thereof to total population of age group 6-11.		42.6%	62.4%	76.4%
No. of pupils in classes VI to VIII		31	67	98
Percentage thereof to total population of age group 11-14.		12.7%	22.6%	28.6%
No. of pupils in classes IX to XI		12	29	46
Percentage thereof to total population of age group 14-17.		5.3%	10.6%	15.6%

The figures indicate that during the 15-year period 1950-51 to 1965-66, the number of primary schools is expected to be doubled while that of the middle and high schools is expected to be (nearly) quadrupled. During the same period the number of training schools is expected to be almost doubled (from 782 to 1,424) and that of training Colleges is expected to increase six times (from 53 to 312). This is to be made possible by increasingly larger allocations of funds under the successive Five-Year Plans. Thus, the actual outlay on elementary and secondary education in the First Plan was Rs. 105 crores while the corresponding expenditure in the Second Plan was Rs. 146 crores. The allocation for the Third Plan was Rs. 297 crores. Unfortunately I have no separate figures of outlay on the teachers' training establishments. But judging from the large increase in training establishments provided for during the relevant period, the outlay would show a correspondingly substantial increase. More recent estimates suggest, however, that the ambitious targets fixed for 1965-66 may not be actually realised. Already, under the impact of forces that could not be foreseen or were otherwise beyond control, a large gap has intervened between our expectations and our achievements. There is, in any case, no doubt about the fact that even for properly looking after the existing number of our primary and secondary students, a large output of trained teachers is an urgent necessity.

Another point of worry is that having regard to our resources,



we may have to sacrifice quality for quantity. If we are to attract the right type of men and women to the teaching profession, we must make their pay and prospects as well as their general conditions of service much better than they are now. An incompetent teacher, indifferently trained, is a great risk to society. Secondly, even if the teachers were properly trained, the equipment and resources of our elementary and secondary schools are so poor and so inadequate that the teachers find it impossible to put their knowledge and their training to practical use. A few earnest souls might honestly try to put their skill to good use but ultimately have to give it up in the unequal struggle with adverse circumstances, bringing in its train the greatest foe of all progress—an attitude of frustration and apathy. The nation's investment in expanding teachers' training facilities is wasted.

There are doubts if a proper selection is made out of the candidates seeking admission to the teachers' training colleges. We seem to depend too much on a University degree. I wish to recall what I have said earlier, namely, that a successful teacher must have an interest in his subject or subjects and must understand and love the child. No doubt, the curriculum provides for the study of educational psychology and initiates the prospective teacher into the proper method of teaching the major school subjects. But is the candidate ultimately selected for admission really qualified according to the tests referred to above? The accent here is on academic attainments and/or formal experience in a school or schools. Nor is there much scope for a meticulous selection on the basis of these tests, for the simple reason that the potentially good teachers, particularly men teachers, are not attracted to school teaching. Our teachers are over-worked and underpaid; their equipment is also, by modern standards, poor. When a graduate turns to school teaching as a career, the chances are that he has proved a failure or in a misfit other fields. It is only when the teaching profession is made attractive enough, at least not less attractive than other comparable professions, that the schools as well as the teachers' training colleges can insist on proper standards of selection. We have already seen how, in the advanced countries, though the minimum academic qualification for admission to a teacher training course is the School Certificate or the Matriculation, with a minimum number of "credits", proficiency in such subjects as Art, Music, Handowrk, Physical Training, etc., is also taken into



consideration. Consideration is also given to the personal qualities of the candidates for admission such as social and athletic abilities, capacity for assuming positions of leadership and the like. In India, preference is given to performance at University examinations rather than to any extra-mural qualifications. There is no doubt that a certain minimum standard of academic competence is the *sine qua non* of a teaching job. But it is also true that mere possession of a degree or diploma is not by itself sufficient to make a good teacher. We also attach some value to previous experience as a teacher. In section V above, expert educational opinion was quoted to the effect that actual teaching is not the most suitable form of preliminary experience. The pre-education of the prospective teacher should rather lie in the extent of his contacts with the children in play centres, settlements, youth organizations, Sunday school, boy scout and girl guide movements and other activity programmes. One should rather ask of a prospective teacher : are you a good mixer, can you be friends with the children, have you wide interests, can you lead them in activity programmes outside the class room ?—rather than how many credits he has obtained at the last examination. Though this last is not an irrelevant question, for as I have already stated, a certain amount of academic competence is presumably necessary, but if it is not accompanied with an attractive personality or if the teacher lacks the qualities of sympathy and patience, or a genial disposition, with an understanding of the child's mind, simply a scholastic achievement or experience in class teaching may not go very far.

Unfortunately, many of our schools cannot provide adequate opportunities of extra-mural association between the teacher and the taught. Very often, there is also a lack of interest of individual teachers in activity programmes. In part, this also is the result of the mental inertia of the school authorities and, in part, due to lack of imagination and resources. Very small schools cannot develop the necessary leadership nor have the wherewithal to meet the cost of such programmes. In India, out of 25,992 secondary schools, 60 per cent. are very small with less than 160 students in each, and of these again 39 per cent. have less than 100 students on the rolls. Unless a school is made economically viable, it would be difficult for it to entertain the necessary trained staff to provide good education.

On the question of the curriculum for the teachers' training course, I think our educations should do well to have a few general subjects in the Teachers' Training Certificate Course. The question whether moral instruction should be included in the course, both for the T.T. Certificate Course and the Teacher-Training College Course should be carefully gone into. The Sri Prakasa Committee (1959) considered the question of religious and moral instruction and thought it "desirable" to make a specific provision, subject to certain limitations, for the teaching of moral and spiritual values. The Committee also recommended that "suitable books should be prepared for all stages—from primary to University—which describe briefly in a comparative and sympathetic manner the basic ideas of all religions as well as the essence of the lives and teachings of the great religious leaders, saints, mystics and philosophers". Suitable books should also be prepared, the Committee suggested, which would help in the inculcation of the virtues of patriotism and social service. The Education Commission also recommends that "conscious and organised attempts be made for imparting education in social, moral and spiritual values with the help, whenever possible, of the ethical teachings of great religions" (*Report*, p. 206). I would strongly recommend the adoption of these recommendations and would go further and suggest that moral and spiritual instruction should be made a "core" subject for the Higher Secondary Course. Naturally it should figure also in the list of special subjects for the B.T. Course. I would also like to suggest that the scope of Physical Education should be broadened to include Health Education.

It is a truism to say that a good teacher is a national asset, the pivot of a sound educational system. We are now engaged in the task of a mass production of teachers to teach at least 13 crores of children of the age group 6-17, assuming that education would be availed of by all within this age-range, that is, up to the Higher Secondary Standard. This consummation is to be reached in the shortest possible time, for as time passes, the number of pupils keeps on increasing. That means that with our limited resources there is a real danger of the quality of education in our teachers' training colleges deteriorating. On the other hand, the demand is for the improvement of teachers' education, to make it more adjusted



to our social and academic needs, along with the improvement of the quality of school education at the primary and secondary stages. In the sphere of elementary education we have already introduced the concept of Basic Education or a craft-based education. This has long been a subject of debate. The point is that we have shown our readiness to make experiments. In the spheres of secondary and University education also we have initiated bold experiments. It is necessary that we should give a new look to teachers' education also. Children of every land deserve nothing less than the very best. We should, therefore, be the last persons to compromise with quality.

One consequence of this is that teacher-training courses of the appropriate standard should cover at least 2 years except that those who have passed the B.Ed. Course or the B.A. Course with Honours in Education or the M.Ed. (or M.A. in Education) may take their B.T. after one year. This extension is deemed necessary not only to bring it in line with modern practice but to do justice to a full and extended course. Nor is it educationally sound to think that we can afford to dump our second best teachers on the primary schools. The British system of Teacher Education makes no such discrimination. By and large that is also the Continental practice. The reason is obvious. It is in the primary classes that the teacher comes to grips with the child mind in its most interesting and most difficult phase. In later years, the child acquires a degree of sophistication when he has already been conditioned to the process of teaching. It is not for nothing that some of our most well-paid teachers in the sphere of elementary education belong to the nursery or pre-primary schools. These also charge high rates of school fees. For these reasons, at present only the well-to-do classes, the affluent sections of the community, can send their wards to such schools. For the large majority of the school-going children, education begins in the primary schools or the primary classes of the high schools. Some go to the basic schools. It is the nation's duty to ensure that these children, who would number about 50 millions in 1965-66, should start their education under the right auspices.

This chapter may fittingly close with a pen-picture of what should be regarded as an expert's view of what a complete teacher-education should be.



In 1939, the Commission on Teacher Education in the U.S.A. invited a representative sample of American Colleges, universities and schools systems to join with it in a co-operative study of teacher education. Some twenty collegiate institutions were associated with this study which continued for 3 years. The report represents the study and the conclusions arrived at. It was published under the auspices of the American Council of Education. In the concluding chapter of this report, page 310, it states that

"the legitimate concern of teacher education covers everything about the individual student from the day he decides to try for the profession, through all phases of his pre-service development, and on into active work until retirement. This means that the College cannot afford to neglect any aspect of each undergraduate's personality. Provision must be made for his optimum growth as a physical, social, mental—in short, as a *human being*."

This is the final summing up of the aim of teacher education.



CHAPTER XIV

HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA : A HISTORICAL RETROSPECT AND ANALYSIS

I

Beginnings

Higher education of the modern (European) type started in India with the establishment of the Hindu College in 1817. The circumstances leading to the establishment of this College—the outcome of the famous controversy between the "Anglicists" and the "Orientalists"—have already been discussed.¹ The Sadler Commission (1917-19) and the Radhakrishnan Commission (1948-49) have both recounted the history. It has also been discussed more recently and in some detail in the centenary volume of the Presidency College, Calcutta, published in 1955, as well as in the *Hundred Years of the University of Calcutta*, published in 1957. It is not necessary to repeat the facts already dealt with as these are easily available in some of the authoritative publications mentioned above. It will be sufficient to mention some of the more important landmarks that lie between the starting point and the close of some of the important phases of development of higher education in India.

The establishment of the Hindu College is taken to be the starting point of a new phase. It was a halting start, as well as, in its initial phases, a modest start. It was the product of non-official effort which received inspiration from certain official views. Warren Hastings had established the Calcutta Madrassa (1781) "to qualify the sons of Mohamedan Gentlemen for responsible and lucrative offices in the State". This was followed, a few years later, in 1792, by the establishment of the Sanskrit College at Banaras "for the preservation and cultivation of the Laws, Literature and Religion

¹ See Chapter VIII.

of the nation, to accomplish the same purpose for the Hindus as the Madrassa for the Mohamedans and specially to supply qualified Hindu assistants to European judges".

It may be observed, in parenthesis, that India did have a good system of indigenous education, prior to these efforts by the servants of the East India Company or by non-official Indians who wanted to introduce English education in India. Apart from the desire to receive what was considered to be modern education in Arts and Science, there was also a strong utilitarian motive behind the support and patronage extended to these moves by non-official Europeans as well as by the authorities of the East India Company. The system of education in ancient (Hindu) India has already been described in a previous chapter. I need only add here that the ancient Hindus cherished a very high ideal and objective of education as part of a rigid discipline of life. During the medieval period of Indian history, under Buddhist inspiration, we had such world reputed centres of learning as those of Taxila, Nalanda, Vikramshila, Vallabi, Kancheepuram and in still more recent times, those of Nabadwip and Krishnagar. Some of the Mahamedan rulers of India were also great patrons of learning though the medium of such learning was Arabic. As such, there were Madrassas at Lahore, Delhi, Rampur, Lucknow, Allahabad, Jaunpur, Ajmer and Bidar. The more important of the institutions specialised in one or more branches of knowledge such as Rampur in Logic and Medicine, Lucknow in Theology and Lahore in Astronomy and Mathematics.² These centres of learning, like their Buddhist or Hindu counterparts, except in certain scattered places where the traditions still persist, have now disappeared. A survey of the indigenous system of education carried out in 1835 and the following years by William Adam disclosed the existence of "a network of primitive Vernacular schools" but that no attempt had been made to develop them.³ The earlier efforts of the Government consisted in attempts to revive the indigenous system of education in the country. In fact, there was a section of opinion which declared that "it would be madness to give them (the Hindus) any

² Report of the University Education Commission (1948-49), p. 8.

³ Report of the Calcutta University Commission (1917-18), Chap. 3, Para 11.



kind of learning other than what they possessed". The Radhakrishnan Commission (1948-49) quotes one of the members of the Court of Directors of the East India Company as saying that "they (the English) had just lost America from their folly in having allowed the establishment of schools and colleges and it would not do for them to repeat the same act of folly in regard to India".

When, therefore, in 1813, the Charter Act inserted a clause to the effect that "A sum of not less than one lac of rupees in each year shall be set apart and applied to the revival and improvement of literature and the encouragement of the learned natives of India and for the introduction and promotion of a knowledge of the sciences among the inhabitants of the British territories of India" a controversy arose as to whether the "literature" mentioned in the clause referred to oriental literature (Sanskrit, Arabic or Persian) or to European literature. Distinguished scholars and administrators found themselves in rival camps. The Anglicists, as is well-known, won the day when Lord Macaulay, the Law Member of the Government of India, decided that the Government was free to employ its funds—the money provided under the Charter Act of 1813—in teaching "what was better worth knowing than Sanskrit and Arabic". This was the view expressed by the Law Member in his famous Minute of 1835 when the matter was placed before the Government by the Committee of Public Instruction and was accepted by the Government in its Resolution dated the 7th March, 1835. The Resolution declared :

"His Lordship-in-Council is of opinion that the great object of the British Government ought to be the promotion of European literature and science amongst the natives of India and that all the funds appropriated for the purposes of education would be best employed on English education alone."

Macnaughten, a member of the General Committee (on Western Education) wrote in his Minute dated March 25, 1835, with reference to the Government Resolution, described as a *coup de main* : "It is really the proclamation of a crusade against every oriental feeling and institution—an open attack on every stronghold and redoubt I would earnestly suggest that no exclusive preference should be shown to the cultivation of the English language." Macnaughten was an Orientalist who held the view that a profound knowledge of Sanskrit and Arabic literature was better than a superficial know-



ledge of the rudiments of English. This point of view was, however, not accepted. English education came in, and came in to stay.

Before we pass on to the next great phase in the evolution of British educational policy in the realm of higher education in India, it would be interesting to have a bird's-eye view of the efforts that had already been made for the spread of English education in this country before or about this time. The facts are taken chiefly from the *Hundred Years of the University of Calcutta* and the Report of the University Education Commission (Radhakrishnan Commission), 1948-49, unless otherwise indicated.

Before the advent of the British and for a long time afterwards, the country had a network of *pāthasālās* and *maktab*s where only the rudiments of learning were imparted. The teacher, the *Guru-mahāshaya* or the *Maulavi*, drew a pay of Rs. 5 (or its equivalent) and was also paid in kind, specially during the ceremonial occasions. The higher centres of learning were the madrassas or the *chatus-pāthis*, and the Sanskrit Seminaries (*tols*). William Adam's estimate (1835) was that, on an average, there were about 100 *tols* in Bengal. The teachers and the advanced students of the Sanskrit seminaries constituted at that time the intellectual *élite* of the Hindu society. It was estimated that there were 15,000 of such teachers and students in India about the end of the eighteenth century. The madrassas or the seats of more elaborate Islamic studies were not so numerous but were well-endowed and patronised. The Persian language, it must be recalled, was still the language of the law courts and of revenue administration. This was learnt both by Hindus and Muslims. Even when these seminaries were in a decadent stage, they bore the tradition of higher education over several centuries.

British efforts were at first directed towards the improvement of the indigenous systems of education. The first contacts between Indians and Englishmen were those due to their trading and commercial activities. A knowledge of each other's language (or culture) was the minimum necessary under the circumstances. The establishment by Warren Hastings, in 1781, of the first Madrassa in Calcutta followed, a few years later, in 1792, by the Sanskrit College in Banaras has already been mentioned. In 1784 was formed the Asiatic Society. This Society was founded, as is well-known, by Sir



William Jones with 30 European members for carrying on research and investigation into oriental literature, history, philosophy, culture, etc.⁴ Englishmen at that time thought that as the ruling class it was their mission to foster the state of learning in the East. In fact, Lord Minto, much concerned at what he called "the decline of Hindu learning at Banaras", proposed the establishment of Sanskrit Colleges at Tirhoot and Nadia. This was subsequently rejected by the Government under the advice of H. H. Wilson and the decision to establish the Sanskrit College in Calcutta was taken instead. Anyway, the Government's policy lay at that time in the direction of encouraging oriental learning. The General Committee itself founded two colleges of oriental learning, one at Delhi and the other at Agra. It was in 1817, that the first step towards a new policy was taken after a great deal of confabulations, to wit, the establishment of the Hindu College (January 20, 1817). This was the result of the untiring efforts of a group of non-officials, Indian and English, interested in the propagation of Western education as a means to rescue India from her involvement in what was felt as sterile studies. These pioneers included, among Indians, Rammohun Roy and Radhakanta Deb, and among Englishmen, David Hare and Edward Hyde East. The initiative of the Christian Missionaries also gave an impetus to the spread of not only Western culture but also Western religious thought. They settled in the Dutch Settlement at Serampore as they were not permitted to pursue their activities in the territories of the East India Company. The Serampore College was established in 1818. In 1827, it obtained a Charter from the Danish King raising it to the status of a University and granting it the power of conferring degrees. The Bishop's College was established next year.

In 1823, the Governor-General-in-Council resolved to constitute a General Committee of Public Instruction as the sole organ of the Government in matters that concerned education, of which J. H. Harington was the President and H. H. Wilson the Secretary. The Committee also took over the Hindu College which had been founded in 1817, thus beginning a new era of Government

* It was only about half a century later that Indian names could be proposed for membership of the Society.



intervention in education. The Committee was also responsible for the starting of English classes in Sanskrit College, Calcutta (1827), Sanskrit College, Banaras, (1832) as well as in the Agra College in the same year. A separate College was established in Delhi in 1829 for propagating Western learning. The General Assembly Institution (precursor of the Scottish Churches College) was established in 1840. The Hugli College grew out of a seminary established in 1836. In 1835, the Government had adopted a policy of State aid to and supervision of schools teaching English. Accordingly, 12 new seminaries were established during 1835-1836.

Thus we see that the Resolution of 1835 was immediately preceded as well as followed by a great spurt in English education in schools as well as colleges. Grants enjoyed by "oriental" colleges till 1835 were withdrawn though they were subsequently restored by Lord Auckland. There was similar educational activity in other parts of India. Mountstuart Elphinstone's Minute of 1823 was responsible for the establishment of schools in Bombay for the teaching of English and the European Sciences. The Elphinstone College was established in 1834. The Madras Christian College, the Hislop College (Nagpur) and the St. John's College (Agra) were established respectively in 1837, 1844 and 1853.

II

Charles Wood's Despatch (1854)

All these developments were haphazard and without any systematic and careful planning. Colleges and other institutions grew up in response to local demands or as the result of individual initiative. Hardly was any action taken on the only serious enquiry undertaken during this period namely, that carried by William Adam (1875-76) who had been appointed to carry out an investigation into the state of elementary education in India. It was he who for the first time drew attention to the fact that English could not be the universal instrument of education in India, particularly in the villages,



though he agreed that those villagers stood in need of the dissemination of European knowledge "for their higher civilization, their intellectual improvement, their moral guidance and their physical comfort". The Government continued to ignore these villages, and to cater to the needs of the upper and middle classes. The reason given was that "there are more villages at the Presidency than we have rupees at our disposal". Government aid was, however, given to schools teaching English and science through the medium of English. The money came from the funds released by the cessation of oriental publications.

This relatively rapid development of English education, the growth of colleges, a clearer articulation of Government policy—all these led to a gradual build-up of opinion to the effect that the time had come when some distinction should be conferred on the students successfully completing their College courses, that they might be known "as persons of liberal education, capable of holding high offices under the Government". This could only be done through the establishment of Universities with the power to confer degrees in recognition of merit. Accordingly, in 1845, the Council of Education made a proposal for the establishment of a University in Calcutta, modelled on the University of London.⁵ The recommendations of the Council were duly conveyed to the Court of Directors of the East India Company in London but failed to receive sanction. This set-back was, however, temporary, for the demand for the establishment of a University continued to gather strength. In fact, the demand was no longer confined to a single Central University as the Council had proposed but was for a number of Universities throughout India, generally one for each Presidency. That was the demand put forward on behalf of the British Indian Association while Marshman and Cameron added one for Agra also.

Finally, there came the Education Despatch of July 19, 1854, commonly known as Wood's Despatch. In this Despatch, the Directors conveyed their conclusion that, despite the rejection by the Court, in 1847, of the proposal to establish a University, the time had arrived

⁵ For the Plan prepared by the Council of Education, see *General Report on Public Instruction in the Bengal Presidency*, 1844-45, p. 9 and 1845-46, pp. 10-13.



for the establishment of Universities in India. Their scheme, also modelled on the London University, followed the broad outline of the earlier scheme of the Council of Education. There would be a Chancellor, a Vice-Chancellor and "Fellows" who would constitute the Senate. The Directors wanted that the constitution of the Senate should be more comprehensive than in the previous proposal. The Senate, in the view of the Directors, should consist of the members of the Council of Education in Calcutta, the Board of Education in Bombay and additional members, Indian and European, who should be so selected as to give the different systems of education in the affiliated institutions a fair voice in the Senate. The functions of the Universities would be to hold examinations and confer degrees. The Senate would have the authority to manage the funds of the University and frame regulations for examinations. The Government of India set up a Committee in Calcutta to settle the details of the scheme including the preparation of a draft Bill for the incorporation of the Universities, as well as of the draft rules for examinations and granting of degrees. It was also decided to set up Universities in Bombay and Madras, in addition to that in Calcutta, which should resemble each other in their main features, have the same legal status and authority, grant the same kind of academic distinction and honour for the same standard of learning.

It is, however, on record that the Committee felt that it would not be possible to follow the pattern of the University of London *in toto* and recommended certain deviations. Thus, though the standard of the Entrance Examination to the Indian Universities and that of London would roughly be the same, the standard of the B.A. Examination would differ considerably in its nature, though "not greatly in extent or difficulty". It was also recommended that the period between the Entrance and the first Degree examinations in the Indian Universities should be extended from two to three or four years. Arrangements were also to be made for the grant of medical and law degrees. An Arts Degree was considered to be a necessary pre-condition for the law degree. It was also decided that the Governor-General of India would be, for the time being, the Chancellor of the University of Calcutta while the Governors of Bombay and Madras would be the Chancellors (*ex-officio*) of the other two Universities. The Lieutenant-Governors of Bengal and North-Western



Provinces, the Chief Justice of Bengal, the Bishop of Calcutta, members of the Supreme Council of India, all for the time being, were made *ex officio* Fellows of the University. Twenty-nine Ordinary Fellows were also to be nominated. The University Act, Act No. II of 1857, was passed by the Legislative Council and received the Governor-General's assent on January 24, 1857. The Preamble to the Act stated as its object the "better encouragement of Her Majesty's subjects of all classes and denominations....in the pursuit of a regular and liberal course of education".

III

The Act of Incorporation, 1857

The Act of 1857 laid down that the number of members of the Senate other than the Chancellor and the Vice-Chancellor should not be less than 30. Colonel W. Grappel, Professor of Jurisprudence, Presidency College, was appointed the first Registrar of the University. The Syndicate of the University was not formed till 1858. Till that time its functions were performed by a Provisional Committee consisting of the Vice-Chancellor and five other members. The Centres of the Entrance Examination were Calcutta, Berhampore, Krishnagar, Dacca, Chittagong, Cuttuck, Bhagalpore, Patna, Benares, Agra, Delhi, Bareilly, Ajmere, Lahore and at any other place the Syndicate might think proper. It was laid down that the degree of B.A. was not to be conferred on a candidate "within four academical years of the time of his passing the Entrance Examination", but a candidate might be admitted to the examination for the degree three years after he had passed the Entrance Examination. A person who immediately after passing the B.A. Examination obtained Honours was entitled to the degree of M.A. without further examination or fees.

The following course was prescribed for the Entrance Examination : (1) Languages including English and *one* of the following : Greek, Latin, Arabic, Persian, Hebrew, Sanskrit, Bengali, Oriya, Hindi, Urdu and Burmese. (2) History including outlines of General History and Indian History, and Geography including a general knowledge of Geography and of the Geography of India. (3) Mathematics and Natural Philosophy which included Arithmetic, Algebra, Geometry



and elementary knowledge of Mechanics. (4) Natural History including general knowledge of the habits and characteristics of vertebrated animals and general economy of vegetation and simple or elementary organs of plants. Every candidate for the examination should have completed the age of 16 and pay an examination fee of Rs. 5 only. For the B.A. Examination, the subjects were (1) Languages : English and any of the languages prescribed for the Entrance Examination ; (2) History, which included History of England and of British India and Ancient History with special reference to the History of Greece up to the death of Alexander and the History of Rome up to the death of Augustus and the History of Jews ; (3) Mathematics and Natural Philosophy which included Arithmetic and Algebra, Geometry, Plane Trigonometry, Mechanics, Hydrostatics, Hydraulics, Pneumatics, Optics and Astronomy, (4) Physical Sciences, including Chemistry, Animal Physiology and Physical Geography, (5) Mental and Moral Sciences which included Logic, Moral Philosophy and Mental Philosophy. A candidate who appeared at the B.A. examination within 5 years of his passing the Entrance examination and was placed in the First Division might be examined for Honours in any one or more of these five subjects : Languages, History, Mathematics and Natural Philosophy, Natural History and the Physical Sciences, and Mental and Moral Sciences.

All these were the outcome of the Education Despatch of 1854. No wonder that it was described as "the Magna Carta of English Education in India". As the Radhakrishnan Commission (1948-49) pointed out, the Despatch of 1854 "set forth a scheme of education far wider and more comprehensive than any one which had been suggested so far". It enunciated the aim of education—the diffusion of the Arts, Science, Philosophy, and Literature of Europe. Both English language and the Indian languages were to be regarded as the media for the diffusion of European knowledge. The Despatch further foreshadowed the establishment of Universities and laid down their general framework. The institution of Professorships in various branches of learning—Law, Civil Engineering and Classical Oriental Languages—was also an important recommendation of the Despatch. As for the Universities, which were to follow the model of the University of London —this, it may be recalled, was suggested by the Council of Education



in 1844—the first Universities were to be established in Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. An outline of the Act of Incorporation, 1857, which provided for the constitution of these Universities has already been given above, with special reference to the Calcutta University.

The Education Despatch was also remarkable for certain other features. This Despatch emphasised the need for providing professional training. The Medical College, Calcutta, had been established earlier in 1835 and another in Madras was started in 1845. The College of Engineering was established in 1856. The Despatch also suggested the gradual withdrawal of Government from direct responsibility for the conduct and maintenance of many of the institutions it had founded, a policy that was also endorsed by the Education Commission of 1882. Until 1879, provision of facilities for higher (collegiate) education was left almost entirely to the Government and the Christian Missions. In 1854, there were, however, only 129 students in Government Colleges in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa and an unknown, but smaller, number in the Missionary Colleges. Between 1854 and 1880, only two private Colleges were founded, *viz.* the St. Xavier's in 1862 and the Metropolitan in 1869. The City College (1881) and the Albert College (1881), now defunct, were founded by the members of the Brahmo Samaj. In 1882, students in Government Colleges numbered 2,394 and those in other Colleges 1,433.

A striking deficiency in educational policy of these times was the neglect of elementary education. There was also a partial eclipse of the indigenous system of education, both elementary and higher, following the Government Resolution of 1835. In that year, the grants enjoyed by the Oriental Colleges was withdrawn but was later restored by Lord Auckland under his Minute dated November 24, 1839. In 1835, a policy was formulated by the General Committee of Public Instruction laying down that "schools for the teaching of English literature and science through the medium of the English language be established in the principal towns under the Presidencies of Fort William and Agra as funds for that purpose become available and as school masters can be procured". This gave a great fillip to the establishment of High English Schools. But the point is that while it retarded in a manner the progress of school education, due to the comparative lack of English teachers, the "unimportance" of Vernacular in the College curriculum made them neglect their mother



tongue. In 1855, there were 47 English schools in the whole of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. By 1871, the number rose to 133. During 1871-1882, there was an actual decrease in the number of Government and aided schools.

By and large, there is no doubt that a systematic plan of higher education could only be concerted with the establishment of Universities. This was the outcome of the circumstances leading to the Despatch of 1854 and of the Despatch itself.

IV

Progress of University Education (1854-1902)

The establishment of Universities was a process of slow growth during the first sixty years of the dates of incorporation of the three Presidency Universities. Thirty years had to pass before the next—the fourth—University was started at Lahore (1882) and the fifth at Allahabad (1887). The century closed with these five Universities. In 1916, two more Universities were established, one at Benares and the other at Mysore. About eleven more Universities were established in the next 30 years. Then there was a gap of about 10 years during which only one University, the Utkal University, was established, a gap possibly due to the War. By 1949, the year of the Radhakrishnan Report, eleven more Universities had been established, namely Saugor (1946), Rajputana (1947), East Punjab (1947), Gauhati (1947), Poona (1948), Roorkee (1948), Jammu and Kashmir (1948), Baroda (1949), Gujarat (1949), Karnatak (1949) and Roorkie (1949). In fact, it was in independent India, starting with 1947, that the development of Universities has been most rapid. Thus, while during the 90 years (1857-1946) only nineteen Universities were established in India, during the 18 years following (1947-1964), as many as 44 Universities have been established, until today (1966) a point has been reached when the University Grants Commission deems it necessary to frown upon the establishment of any more Universities without the U.G.C. giving the green light.*

* In addition to these Universities, there are 9 institutions (up to 1963-64) which are "deemed to be Universities" under Sec. 3 of the University Grants Commission Act (Act III of 1956).



The progress of University education may further be gauged from the following figures as presented by the U.G.C. in its report for 1963-1964. Inclusive of Jawaharlal Nehru Krishi Visva-Vidyalaya, there were at the end of 1964, 62 Universities functioning in India. The number of Colleges in 1963-64 was 2,111 as against 1938 in 1962-63. Student enrolment in the Universities (and Colleges) was 13,84,697, inclusive of an estimated enrolment of 2 lakhs in institutions and classes under the jurisdiction of the Board of Intermediate Education, Uttar Pradesh, an increase of 1,12,031 over the enrolment in 1962-63. As the establishment of new Universities requires substantial investment of public funds if proper quality and standards of education have to be maintained, the U.G.C. now considers it desirable that before any new Universities are established the State Governments concerned should prepare, in consultation with the U.G.C., a "perspective plan" for the next 5 or 10 years "taking into account the available resources and facilities and the needs for a further development and expansion of higher education".

Two other developments have taken place in the field of higher education which deserve mention. One is the establishment, in 1925, of the Inter-University Board. This Board has been performing a very useful function as an advisory body and provides a forum for a top-level discussion of University problems. The other is the establishment of the University Grants Commission. This Commission was constituted by the Government of India in 1953 in pursuance of the recommendation of the Radhakrishnan Commission. An Act of the Indian Parliament passed in 1956 gave it a statutory autonomous status. The development aspect of higher education is its main province, and it has authority to make appropriate grants for purposes of developing University education and other centres of higher education and research. It has helped to up-grade the salaries of teachers in Universities as well as in the affiliated (non-Government) Colleges, made grants towards the improvement of laboratories and libraries, and for various specialised schemes of development. Its recent activities include the sponsoring of "Summer Institutes", and of Centres of Advanced Study and Research in different Universities in particular specialities and establishment of Review Committees to suggest improvement and modernization of facilities for training and research as well as of the syllabi in various subjects of study.



It has also established a special Committee, known as the "Standards Committee" to undertake a systematic and objective study of the standards prevailing in our Universities and has been devoting attention to the problem of examination reform. There are numerous other fields where the U.G.C. has been promoting and organising the collaboration of experts in dealing with special problems. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the U.G.C. has now become a powerful instrument for a major educational break-through in India. Most important of these has been the introduction of the Three-Year Degree Course which we shall take up later for special consideration.

Since the Education Despatch of 1854, a number of Commissions of Enquiry have been set up at intervals to report on the state of higher education and to make recommendations for its improvement. In 1882, the Government of India appointed a Commission "to enquire into the manner in which effect had been given to the principles of the Despatch of 1854 and to suggest such measures as it may think desirable in order to the further carrying out of the policy therein laid down". William Hunter was appointed Chairman of the Commission and the members included Anandamohan Bose, Alfred Croft, Bhudev Mukherjee, Maharaja Jatindramohan Tagore, K. T. Telang and Saiyyid Ahmad (later succeeded by his son Sayyid Mahmud). This Commission, though it was authorised to enquire into the working of the policy underlying the Education Despatch of 1854, was restricted to the consideration of elementary education—to "specially bear in mind the great importance which the Government attached to the subject of primary education". The Government, it appeared, had at last awakened to the sense that "the different branches of Public Instruction should, if possible, move forward together, and with more equal (*sic*) education throughout the empire and the means by which this can everywhere be extended and improved". There seemed, however, to have been, at that time, a good deal of apprehension that this sudden interest, after the lapse of about 18 years, in primary education, meant a reversal of the policy of Government support for higher education. In fact, within 5 years of Charles Wood's Despatch and 2 years of the establishment of the three Presidency Universities (Calcutta, Bombay and Madras), the British Secretary of State was cogitating that if the Government were to make available



elementary education to "the general population", others who wanted more than that "might, as a general rule, be left to exert themselves to procure it (higher education), with or without the assistance of the Government". This point of view, was, of course, not pursued at further that time. On the other hand, when the Government of India, in 1870, proposed that public expenditure on Colleges in Bengal should be reduced to "an equality with the sum total of the endowments and fees of the Colleges (—the idea of matching grant ?)", the Secretary of State replied that such a policy would tend "to paralyse.....high education in Bengal" and "to the diminution, rather than the augmentation, of public liberality". The Hunter Committee itself gave very weighty reasons in favour of the gradual withdrawal of Government from financial support for higher education. One of these was that private effort would be more economical in producing the same results.⁷ The Despatch of 1854 had also contemplated the transfer of many of the existing Government institutions to the management of local bodies. Further, the transfer of collegiate education to private management would tend to make for the diversification of the educational system. Finally, the Commission made this important declaration : "The declared neutrality of the State forbids its connecting the institutions directly maintained by it with any form of faith ; and the other alternative of giving equal facilities in such institutions for the inculcation of all forms of faith involves practical difficulties which we believe to be insuperable." So it added that this difficulty was likely to be removed in the case of institutions under private management. These could provide religious instruction for their students and thereby contribute to "the intellectual development of the Indian Community by arousing enquiry on the highest themes of human thought and thus helping to meet what is probably the greatest danger of all higher education in India—the too exclusive attention to the mere passing of examinations, thus helping to meet what is probably the greatest danger of all higher education in India—the too exclusive attention

⁷ Financial assessment had revealed that the Government were spending approximately Rs. 7,50,000 on the Government Colleges. It was thought that at the then existing rate of aid for private colleges, one-eighth of this amount would be sufficient to educate the same number of students in aided Colleges.



to the mere passing of examinations and to the personal advantages to be derived therefrom". How true and prophetic these words have turned out to be ! The Commission thought that the process of withdrawal of Government support should be by slow and cautious steps ; and that there was undoubtedly an advantage in the co-existence of the two types of education, Government and private, for promoting healthy competition. If the standard of excellence, however, were to be judged by the percentage of passes at an examination, it would, instead of advancing real excellence in education, rather hamper it. About religious and moral education, the Commission made a compromise by recommending that an attempt should be made to prepare a moral text book based upon the fundamental principles of natural religion such as may be taught in Government and non-Government Colleges. Other recommendations of the Commission were that there should be alternative courses in the larger colleges and that lectures should be arranged during each session by either the Principal or by one of the professors in Government and Aided Colleges on "the duties of a man and a citizen".

In accepting the "cautious and well-considered" proposals of the Commission relating to the transfer of Colleges to private management—"to a suitable agency, public or private", to be more precise—the Government of India directed the local Governments to close down, or hand over the control of some of the muffassal colleges to private management. Accordingly, the Berhampore College was transferred to a Trust created by Maharani Swarnamoyee of Cossimbazar while the Midnapur College was transferred to the local Municipality. In spite of this policy which was publicly condemned as retrograde at that time, private effort rose equal to the occasion and we see the establishment, through the efforts of some of the distinguished leaders of Bengal like Iswarchandra Vidyasagar, Anandamohan Bose and others, of a number of Colleges which have contributed not a little to the educational advancement of Bengal.

The acceptance of the main recommendations of the Hunter Commission was followed by the Government's decision to publish an annual report on the progress of education in the country. The first quinquennial report, published in 1886 and covering the five years 1881-1885 provided valuable statistics regarding enrolment,



examination results as well as expenses on Collegiate education derived from public and private funds. The Review of the next five years showed that the Universities of Calcutta and Madras had become entirely independent of Government aid. After the publication of the Report of the Commission, the progress and expansion of higher education in India was greatly accelerated. The number of high schools increased rapidly, so did the colleges. In 1882, there were 68 affiliated Colleges. During the next two decades, the number increased by 61 and 50 respectively. In 1901-02, the total number of affiliated Colleges was 179 of which 126 were in British India. The student enrolment during this period increased by more than 140 per cent.

The next landmark in the evolution of higher education in India was the appointment of the Universities Commission in 1902. Its objects were "to enquire into the condition and prospects of the Universities established in British India; to consider and report upon any proposals which have been, or may be, made for improving their constitution and working and to recommend such measures as may tend to elevate the standard of University teaching, and to promote the advancement of learning". Incidentally it may be noticed that the Baconian phrase "advancement of learning" occurs for the first time in the terms of reference of this Commission. It has since been adopted as the motto of the University of Calcutta.

The main recommendations of the Commission which was presided over by Thomas Raleigh and included, as its members, Syed Hossain Bilgrami, J. P. Hewett (Home Secretary, Government of India), Alexander Pedler (Director of Public Instruction, Bengal), A. G. Bourne (Principal, Presidency College, Madras), D. MacKichan (Principal, Wilson's College, Bombay) and Gooroodas Banerjee* are thus summarised :

1. The legal powers of the older Universities should be enlarged so that all the Universities may be recognised as Teaching Bodies but the local limits should be more accurately defined and steps taken to remove from the Calcutta list the affiliated colleges in the Central Provinces, United Provinces, etc.

* Gooroodas Banerjee was taken in as a member after there was a public protest against the non-inclusion of any Indian educationist in the Commission. He later on became Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University.

2. The Senate, the Syndicate and the Faculties have to be reorganized and made more representative than before.
3. The affiliation rules have to be framed in such a way as to secure (a) that no institution shall be admitted to affiliation unless on the fullest information ; (b) that no institution once admitted be allowed to fall below the standards of efficiency required for affiliation and the Syndicate should satisfy itself from time to time on this point.
4. There should be a properly constituted Governing Body for each College.
5. Attention should be paid to the residence and discipline of students.
6. The courses and methods of examination in all subjects have to be changed according to the suggestions made in the Report.

It will be seen that the Commission took a very practical line, clear and definite, in making their recommendations. The chief importance of the Report arises from the fact that it formed the basis of the Indian Universities Act of 1904. The practical line was also evident in the conditions that it framed for the affiliation of colleges. Apart from the points mentioned above, these included the condition that no college should be dependent on the interest or caprice of an individual and that its surplus funds must be spent on the improvement of the college. It was also laid down that the teaching staff should be adequate to the course of study, that the colleges should be "decently and suitably housed", and that there is adequate provision for the health and comfort of the students. Also, " every encouragement should be given to societies and pursuits which bring students together out of the class."⁹ Further, it was enjoined that the use of 'keys' should be in every way discouraged by the college authorities. It would seem as though these conditions and precautions were rather elaborately drawn up but the fact was that complaints had been voiced in the legislature by no less a person than a member of the Commission. In fact, some of the proposals were made in such a detailed form that, to some critics they appeared to be rigid and "unpractical". The Commission had also made elaborate recommendations on courses of studies, examinations and other subjects of academic interest.

The general reaction of the people, particularly the nationalist section, was that the report of the Commission was designed to bring the Universities under full official control. They had seen through

⁹ Today, one of the problems is to keep the students *inside* the class.



the Government's move to exclude Indian educationists from membership of the Commission. Ultimately, Gooroodas Banerjee had to be taken in due to public protest ; so was Asutosh Mookerjee taken in as a local member for Calcutta. They had also seen how the Simla Conference held in 1901 had been rigged and the evidence tendered before it withheld from publication. The recommendations made in the Report of the Commission, particularly regarding the constitution of the Senate and the conditions of affiliation, increased public apprehension, so much so that Lord Curzon, the Governor-General, was moved to defend the proposals of the Commission by pointing out that " the instruments of the sentence hold in their hand not the executioner's axe but the phial that contains the elixir of a new and happy resurrection". So far as the constitution of the Senate was concerned, the Commission had recommended that steps should be taken to reduce the number of Fellows and that the standard of their qualifications should be raised. The University Bill of 1904 which was based on the findings of the Commission ultimately provided a Senate of 100 members of which only 10 were to be elected by the Faculties and 10 elected by the registered graduates. Again, the Commission had considered it " undesirable " that appointments made by the Syndicate, decisions in regard to affiliation or disaffiliation of Colleges as well as exemptions from examination rules, should be reviewed in the Senate. This was a real bone of contention. The Bill of 1904 when it came up before the Imperial Legislative Council encountered heavy weather when men like G. K. Gokhale and Asutosh Mookerjee gave persistent opposition to it.

V

The Indian Universities Act, 1904

It took the Government 47 years to replace the Act of 1857. That Act had provided only for a single type of University, viz., that of an affiliating University. Such a University prescribed the courses of study, affiliated Colleges and conducted examinations on the basis of a standard syllabus in each subject. It was the Act of 1904 which,



in spite of its inauspicious beginning and its introduction in a hostile climate, had at least held out the possibility of an affiliating University being changed to a teaching University. The acceptance by the University of Calcutta of a generous donation by Prosunna Coomar Tagore for instituting a Professorship of Law, and the appointment of a noted jurist to that Professorship to deliver a course of lectures on Hindu Law, had already broken the ice of opposition and opened the way to the transition. The transition brought about a substantive change in the character of our Universities. The Calcutta University once again led the way.

I have already discussed the role that Asutosh Mookerjee played in the transformation of the Calcutta University, how he built up the post-graduate departments of teaching and research, how he attracted substantial endowments and established the foundations of scientific and technological education in India, and last but not least, how he provided a dynamic leadership at the academic nerve-centre of India. Of the 62 Universities recently listed in official statistics, only one is shown as an affiliating University without teaching departments of its own ; all of the rest combine post-graduate teaching with their other functions. All these Universities, one may say, followed the lead of Asutosh Mookerjee.

The immediate impact of the Act was not, of course, quite good. Apart from the fact that it provided for what was in effect a completely officialised Senate with reduced membership and with very vital powers concentrated in the hands of the executive—the Syndicate—one immediate result of the new legislation was the reduction in the number of Colleges. In 1902, the number of Colleges in British India was 192 ; in 1907, in spite of the affiliation of some new colleges, it stood at 174 ; in 1912, it was further reduced to 170. It is believed that this fall in the number of affiliated colleges in the decade immediately following the Act was due to the stringent conditions of affiliation. This, however, did not prevent a substantial increase in student enrolments : from about 20,000 in 1902, it increased to 50,000 in 1922, the average enrolment in a College increasing from 104 to 241, which, judged by the standards reached by some of the bigger colleges in Calcutta (and elsewhere) at present would appear to be fantastically low. Apart from the rigid conditions of affiliation which the Act of 1904 laid down, there was another factor that disturbed



the progress of education in the State. That was the Partition of Bengal which, among other things, created a desire for a 'National' system of education with a concomitant direction to boycott the existing institutions on which—so the leaders of the movement argued—a foreign system of culture with a foreign language as its medium had been imposed. The leaders of the movement, Poet Tagore in particular, strove in vain to underscore the positive aspect of the movement which was meant to be something permanent and creatively national rather than a form of merely negative protest on which it appears to have been originally based. The tempo of the movement lasted for a few years—as long as its immediate cause, the Partition of Bengal, continued to operate. The reaction against English education was reflected in the establishment of the National Council of Education in Bengal and of such institutions as the Gurukul Kangri of Hardwar. The present Jadavpur University bears testimony to the far-sighted efforts of some of the leaders of the National Education Movement.

Was it an accident that Asutosh Mookerjee was chosen to head the Committee, appointed in 1906, to frame the new regulations under the Act of 1924 ? Alexander Pedler, the first Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University under the new Act, could not secure the agreement of the Senate on the new Regulations during the period of his office. The time limit had expired and the new Committee, appointed by the Government of India, was charged with the task of framing the Regulations. The historian of the Calcutta University records that all suspicions and misgivings regarding the intention behind the Act (to make the University subservient to the Government) "were very soon dispelled by Asutosh's handling of the Act and the Regulations". Under the new Regulations, the University was charged with the power of control and supervision over its affiliated colleges and recognised schools. Changes of a fundamental character were also introduced by the Regulations relating to the various examinations of the University. The claims of the Indian vernaculars were recognised from Matriculation up to the Degree. The most important of the changes brought about by the new Regulations related to the arrangements for post-graduate teaching. This was in a sense to be complementary to the teaching to be provided by the affiliated colleges for which the Act of Incorporation (1857)



had made no provision. Section 3 of the Act of 1904 gave power to the University "of making provision for the instruction of students with power to appoint University Professors and Lecturers". In this task, the question of viewing it from the point of view of numbers —was repeatedly emphasised. The University, according to Curzon, is meant to "create an atmosphere of intellectual refinement and culture" and "a moral quality and influence would spring within it, and tradition of reverence would grow up like creepers round its walls". Asutosh said in his Convocation address (1907) : "It is absolutely wrong to apply statistics to the case of institutions like Universities where the highest form of knowledge has to be cultivated. It is not the number but the quality of students, it is not the *quantum* of knowledge but the character of the training which is received that determines the position of the University." And, some 15 years later, the Calcutta University Commission (Sadler Commission) thus wrote of the work of the Calcutta University : "The conditions of student life, and the character of the training afforded by the Colleges, were very materially improved as a result of the Act of 1904 and of the work which it set on foot ; and we desire cordially to recognise the reality and value of these achievements." The Commission further testified to "the remarkable expansion" of post-graduate teaching under the direct auspices of the University which had been achieved as a result of the new principle laid down in 1904.

Up to 1916, there were only five Universities that had been established in India under the Act of Incorporation. The Act of 1904 was a consolidating and amending Act. It was passed with particular reference to the Calcutta University. The new interest in the expanding functions of a University and the further development of the Calcutta University with its persistent demand for centralisation of post-graduate teaching led the Government of India to further clarify its position in regard to higher education. A Government Resolution on Educational Policy adopted in 1913 indicated that as India would not be able to dispense with the affiliating Universities for a long time, it was necessary to demarcate the area of their control as well as to create a new type of teaching and residential universities within each of the provinces. Actually, due to the outbreak of the First World War only two such Universities could be established,



both in 1916, one at Banaras (Teaching) and the other at Patna (Teaching and Affiliating), to cater to the needs of the new province of Bihar and Orissa. The Banaras Hindu University was a special type of University. Founded through the efforts of a distinguished leader of India, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, it was intended to be a centre of Hindu Culture and thought and at the same time to promote the study of the Applied Sciences.

VI

The Sadler Commission

The Calcutta University Commission, better known as the Sadler Commission, was appointed in 1916 for a comprehensive enquiry into "the conditions and prospects of the University of Calcutta and to consider the question of a constructive policy in relation to the questions which it presents." The terms of reference of the Commission were such as would be relevant to an enquiry concerning Universities in India in general which, sooner or later, would be facing problems similar to those facing the University of Calcutta, particularly those that are of the affiliating and teaching type. In the words of the Government Resolution (September 14, 1917) announcing the Commission, it was to be so constituted as to "ensure an investigation of the problems connected with the University and the formulation of recommendations in the light of the best expert opinion upon the present requirements of University instruction and organization". With the assistance of the Secretary of State of India, the services of the following British experts were secured, namely, Michael Sadler, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Leeds, who was appointed President of the Commission, J. W. Gregory of the University of Glasgow, P. J. Hartog of the University of London, and Ramsay Muir of the University of Manchester, as members. The other members included Asutosh Mookerjee, W. W. Hornell (D.P.I., Bengal), and Zia-Ud-Din Ahmad. Anderson, Assistant Education Secretary, Government of India, was appointed Secretary to the Commission. The Commission reported in 1919.

The Commission, though it was appointed primarily in connection with the conditions and prospects of the University of Calcutta,



worked in a broader perspective, dealing with practically every problem of Secondary and University education. It also studied the organization and working of the other Indian Universities. As the Commission itself observed : " no satisfactory re-organization of the University system of Bengal will be possible unless and until a radical re-organization of the system of Secondary Education upon which University work depends, is carried into effect." Accordingly the Commission recommended that a separate Board of Secondary and Intermediate Examination be constituted, that intermediate classes be taken away from the University and be transferred to Intermediate Colleges and that both Secondary Schools and Intermediate Colleges be placed under the proposed Board. The Commission also emphasized the need for a larger number of trained teachers. So far as University education was concerned, the Commission urged the reconstitution of the Calcutta University as a teaching University, with a multi-collegiate base. The muffassil Colleges were to be organised in such a way as would permit their later reconstitution into separate Universities by the concentration of higher teaching at a few points. The project of a University of Dacca was to be carried out as soon as possible. The Calcutta University which so far had enjoyed the distinction of being placed under the jurisdiction of the Government of India, unlike other Universities which had been placed under the jurisdiction of the respective Provincial Governments was also to be transferred to the control of the Government of Bengal. The Commission, however, recommended that the constitution of the University (of Calcutta) should be changed and that the new University authorities would be the University Court, an Executive Council, an Academic Council and a paid Vice-Chancellor. Presumably that would replace the existing Senate, Syndicate and the Post-Graduate Councils. A new organization of the teaching services in the Universities was also considered necessary.

One of the most important recommendations of the Calcutta University Commission related to the reconstitution of the two-year degree course into a three-year course. The then existing duration of the College course was 2 years (for the Intermediate course) after Matriculation and 2 years for the Degree course thereafter. The Commission, as we have seen, proposed the transfer of the Intermediate classes of a College to separate Intermediate Colleges to be



placed under the proposed Board of Secondary and Intermediate education. The Colleges would, therefore, be concerned only with the three-year Degree course, without the load—sometimes a very heavy load—of the Intermediate classes. To begin with, the Honours Courses should be of 3 years' duration while that of the Pass Courses should be extended to the same period (of 3 years) "soon after." In other words, the Colleges would, under the proposed scheme, have only the degree classes covering a period of three years, while secondary education would have two more years added to the 10 classes of the Secondary Schools in lieu of the old intermediate classes, that is to say, there would be a 12-year secondary (including intermediate) education followed by a 3-year Collegiate course. Special attention was to be paid to women's education, a Special Board to be constituted for the purpose.

This was the first occasion when authoritative support was given to the Three-Year Degree Course. The legislative authority for the University would continue to be the Central Legislature for the fundamental Act which could also amend or alter it; statutes were to be made by the Central Legislature but would be alterable by the Court of the University, regulations to be made by the Executive Committee which should also have the power of issuing Ordinances, subject to the ratification by the Court, and recommendations to be made by the appropriate bodies under the powers entrusted by Statutes or Ordinances. With the transfer of the University to Provincial jurisdiction, the provincial Governor would be the Chancellor, the Governor-General of India being the "Visitor." The University Court was to be a large representative body with a few ex-officio and nominated members. The Executive Committee would be a body of about 17 members while the Academic Council would consist of 80 to 100 members including representatives of all constituent Colleges and of all grades of teachers.

On the teaching side, the Commission's over-all policy was to convert the University primarily into a real teaching University for which the teaching resources of the city of Calcutta (including those of the Presidency College) were to be mobilised. Colleges were divided into two broad categories: University Colleges, that is Colleges owned and managed by the Universities (these were called Incorporated Colleges) and the Constituent Colleges whose rank and

privileges were to be laid down by statutes. An interesting suggestion was that at least ten Chairs were to be held by teachers of colleges to be known as "Presidency Chairs," carrying all the dignity and privileges of Professors of the University. Other recommendations of the Commission in the sphere of Collegiate education were the establishment of an Islamic College and an orthodox Hindu College based on the Degree department of the Sanskrit College. University Chairs or lectureships in Arabic, Persian and Islamic History were to be attached to the former while Sanskrit and Pali were to be given to the new Hindu College. The Commission also made recommendations with regard to professional Colleges. Among its recommendations in this regard, one was the establishment of a Dental College. The Calcutta Medical College and the Belgachia (now R. G. Kar) Medical College were to be treated as a Constituent Colleges ; so also the Civil Engineering College at Sibpur, Howrah, with the recommendation that the latter should institute training also in Electrical and Mechanical Engineering courses. The Bachelor of Law Degree, the Commission proposed, should be a three-year post-graduate course. One recommendation with regard to the Tagore Law Professorship was to convert it into a Professorship of Jurisprudence or Roman law. The Commission further recommended the creation of a School of Agriculture, organization of training for commercial career and the extension of the study of technological subject. Proposing that the amendment of the University Act should not be made on a piecemeal basis but that the Government should decide their policy as a whole, the Commission expressed the view that whatever the scheme that was finally adopted, certain reforms should not be postponed any longer, and of these, they listed the following : further residential accommodation, a teacher training department and a department of education, additional accommodation for teachers, and improvement of the health of students.

VII

Its Sequel

It will be realised, even from this brief review of the Commission's recommendations, that it was not merely a *magnum opus* on the organization and functions of the Calcutta University but that the



reforms proposed were applicable, in their intent and scope, not merely to the Calcutta University but to University education in general in this country. As a matter of fact, the report of the Commission did not have any appreciable impact on the affairs of the Calcutta University for reasons which need not be discussed. The United Provinces accepted the recommendations of the Commission to the extent that in 1921 it constituted a Board of High School and Intermediate Examination to take over secondary education in the province. The Universities of Allahabad and Lucknow, and to a certain extent, Agra, attempted to follow the recommendations of the Commission. The Annamalai University also followed a similar pattern. In Bengal, the University of Dacca, with its 3-year Honours Course, was a direct result of the Commission's recommendations. So far as the Commission favoured the idea of teaching Universities, a number of such Universities were established in different parts of India in fairly quick succession, including the reconstituted Universities of Madras and Bombay, the Madras Act being passed in 1923 and the Bombay Act amended in 1928. Patna and Nagpur also started teaching work, though somewhat late.

The main hurdle for Bengal in adopting the far-reaching recommendations of the Sadler Commission's Report was financial. The situation did not improve when education was made a "transferred subject" within the jurisdiction of the Provincial Government, under the Government of India Act, 1919. When Pravash Chandra Mitra, Education Minister, Bengal, was considering the question of undertaking fresh legislation for the University of Calcutta, the Syndicate of the University wanted to have a clear idea of the extent of financial responsibility that the Provincial Government might be in a position to shoulder, Minister Mitra bluntly told the Vice-Chancellor that "it is not possible for the Government to hold out any definite assurance of financial assistance". That was in May, 1923. Again in February, 1924, the Government was re-iterating that their ability to come to the rescue of the University in its financial difficulties "was....strictly limited." And yet the fundamental feature of the Sadler Report was that the Commission had tried to secure for the University of Calcutta a constitution which would make the University a self-governing institution in all matters, financial and academic, and to leave decisions of



academic questions "mainly to persons following the profession of education". And, then, to clinch the argument, as it were, Pravash Mitra said : "In our view, legislation on the lines of the University Commission's recommendations, without necessary financial backing, will mean the breakdown not only of the Calcutta University but also of many private colleges. Reform and reorganization were cardinal points which educators have made much of."

These extracts are only a reminder to us of the double-faced role which the Government was playing at the time. There were clear indications that the Government, while paying lip service to the ideals of the Calcutta University and the great work being done by it under the leadership of Asutosh Mookerjee, ably assisted by a devoted band of other eminent teachers, educationists and Senators, was keen on imposing bureaucratic control over what had become a powerful institution of national life, through the familiar device of conditional financial assistance. Indeed, Praphullachandra Ray (Acharya P. C. Ray) while moving for the adoption of the report of the Committee appointed to consider and report on the Government's letter dated August 23, 1922, said in a characteristically forthright speech : "A perusal of the Government's letter leads us to the conclusion that the Government desires to utilise the present financial embarrassment of the University to obtain control over its affairs in a manner not contemplated in the Indian Universities Act of 1904.. It seems to me, Sir, that there is an unseen hand working from behind with dark and sinister purposes since the year 1913 onwards." Even Principal Howells (Serampore College) said during the debate : "It will be a betrayal of the great trust imposed on us as a University, if we yield." A Post-graduate Reorganization Committee took up the question later and the University made a request for a recurring grant of three lakhs of rupees to enable it to carry on post-graduate work. This was ultimately conceded, provided "the University figures prove to be correct" (as disclosed by Chancellor Lytton in his Convocation Address in February, 1926).

Incidentally, though it is not strictly relevant to this chapter, it may be recalled that the Government's attempts during this period to set up a Secondary Education Board in Bengal were similarly thought to be actuated by a desire to clamp down official control over the system of secondary education. But due to serious differences of opinion,



unfavourable public opinion and other reasons, the matter was not proceeded with. In Dacca, a Board of Secondary and Intermediate Education was, however, established on the lines of the Sadler Commission's Report. The University of Calcutta continued efforts in its own way for the improvement of secondary education. One of the most important changes brought about at this time took place in 1936 when Bengali was made the medium of secondary education. It was in 1948 that candidates in I.A., I.Sc., B.A., B.Sc., (other than in Honours subject) and B.Com. examinations were given the option of writing their answers in Bengali in all subjects except the language papers other than Bengali. This by and large made Bengali also the medium of instruction (together with English) in the undergraduate classes of the affiliated colleges. Another landmark of this period was the report of the Central Advisory Board of Education (1944) known as the Sargent Report which visualised what was grandiloquently described as a "national system of education" to which detailed reference has been made in a previous chapter. Education, according to this report, should be free and compulsory for the age group 6-14 after which it should divert into technical studies. It was intended thereby to mitigate the problem of unemployment and at the same time to relieve the pressure on the Universities. But the report, though it contained for the first time a well thought-out plan of educational reconstruction, with a long time perspective, and could be compared, in its intrinsic importance, with Adam's report of more than a century ago, could not be acted upon because of its huge financial implications. One of the recommendations of the C.A.B. report related to the establishment of a University Grants Committee which has since been implemented. The U.P. has even established a State Grant Committee.

The World War II, the "Quit India" Movement, the Great Famine (1943)—all these affected the state of education in this country. Large strides have been made in the sphere of University Education (as in other spheres) since the last Act—that of 1904—was passed. Independence came in 1947, when the people of India awoke into a new awareness of their national problems of which not the least significant was the one of reorganization of the nation's Universities, in particular, and of higher education in general. In other words, we now enter upon the age of our contemporaries.

CHAPTER XV

HIGHER EDUCATION IN FREE INDIA

I

Introduction

India became free on August 15, 1947. It is on record that in spite of the extremely disturbed conditions, both political and administrative, to which India succeeded and the inevitably difficult and prolonged period of adjustment that followed during and after the transfer of power, the supreme importance of the educational reconstruction of the country consistent with the assumption of new responsibilities by our leaders was not lost of sight of. This is underlined by the fact that since the adoption of the new Constitution, our Presidents as well as Vice-Presidents have been men of vast erudition and scholarship and all of them, particularly President Radhakrishnan and President Zakir Hussain, have made significant contributions to the theory and practice of education. Dr. Rajendra Prasad, our first President, was also a brilliant product of the Calcutta University and sometime a teacher. Our first Education Minister, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, was another of the galaxy of talents that adorned the Treasury Benches in those exciting days. With the overall leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru, in whom also the scholar fought a relentless battle with the politician, the men and women who had brought about the fulfilment of India's struggle for freedom were set for a glorious re-awakening of an ancient and lofty civilization into a new world of challenge and responsibilities. It was, thus, in the fitness of things that within a year of the attainment of independence, and inspite of all other pre-occupations, they decided to invite Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan to head a Commission to advise the Government on the reorganization of University education in India. Within a few years they assembled another powerful Commission to formulate a plan for the reorganization of secondary



education also in India. Another distinguished Indian, Lakshmanaswamy Mudaliar, was appointed Chairman of the Commission. And then, as a climax to the series, D. S. Kothari, Chairman of the University Grants Commission, a man widely honoured in his own right as an eminent scholar and scientist, has, as Chairman of the Education Commission appointed by the Government of India in 1964, submitted a monumental report on the reorganization of the entire educational system of the country. A great deal of reforms have been effected, as we have seen, but the present need is not only for accelerating our pace of development but to lay down the lines of an integrated development in which all the stages of our educational system should hold together in fulfilment of clearly perceived national objectives. We have been waiting for the last twenty years for a national policy to emerge that would replace the policy hitherto followed of piecemeal repairs to a creaking bandwagon.

No doubt, the path to our educational objectives had to cross many hurdles. To the political and administrative crisis that followed the transfer of Power and the creation of Pakistan by the dismemberment of this country, was added the constitutional provision making Education a State subject. Naturally, Central policy in matters educational had to move within specific limits and with a halter round its neck, as it were. The States, on the other hand, were allowed very inadequate financial resources to meet the new challenges. To some extent the risk of the Centre and the State moving at cross-purposes was, in practice, somewhat lessened by the political ascendancy of the Congress Party practically throughout India till 1967, at the Centre as well as in the States. Even, then, there were regional pulls and regional differences which the democratic set-up of the country did not permit the Centre to override to enforce its own line of thinking on the State Governments. To-day, with non-Congress Governments in power in several States of India, the situation has become undoubtedly more difficult. But the possibility of a consensus is already there and the need for frequent consultations has been recognized. Nevertheless, even where sharp differences exist, an independent expert assessment of our educational problems, by men who have had no political axe to grind, such as those carried out by the Radhakrishnan, Mudaliar and Kothari Commissions, would always demand careful



attention on its own merits ; and if any State fails to accept the guide-lines chalked out by these bodies with the whole weight of their unrivalled experience and wisdom behind them (subject to such local variations or adjustments as might be found necessary in individual States), it is more likely that the State in question would fall behind the collective march towards an integrated national policy even though it might apparently make an appreciable gain from the political or party point of view. On the other hand, it would be unrealistic on the part of the Centre not to recognise the special circumstances of distinct areas or the views of the peoples of different States which their respective Governments are hardly in a position to ignore. The problem, therefore, is in such circumstances, to discover an area of agreement which, there is no reason to doubt, is likely to be a substantial one. This would be the background for all future efforts to reach a new consensus.

It would be helpful if our attention is first directed to what the Indian Universities (Radhakrishnan) Commission (1948) had to say on the very comprehensive terms of reference issued to them, on the problem of higher education in our country.

II

Aims and Objectives of University Education

The Radhakrishnan Commission first lays down what they regard as a wider conception of the duties and responsibilities of Universities. "They have to provide leadership in politics and administration, the professions, industry and commerce. They have to meet the increasing demand for every type of higher education, literary and scientific, technical and professional.... It is for the Universities to create knowledge and train minds who would bring together the two, material resources and human energies." The Commission goes on to point out that the "purpose of all education, it is admitted by thinkers of East and West, is to provide a coherent picture of the Universe and integrated way of life. We must obtain through it, a sense of perspective, a synoptic vision, a *Samanvaya* of the different items of knowledge." So far as University teaching



is concerned, the Commission lays down the following as its aims and objectives :

- (1) Transmission of the intellectual and ethical knowledge of humanity to the young.
- (2) Enrichment of this heritage and extension of the boundaries of knowledge.
- (3) Development of Personality.

The U.G.C. Committee on the Standards of University Education (1965) gave a more elaborate statement on the aims of University education in India, as given below :

- (1) Recent developments in the economic, social and political spheres in the country call for a re-appraisal of the functions of the Indian University. In the context of the far-reaching economic and social changes taking place in India, Universities should lay much greater stress on development-oriented education.
- (2) The pursuit of liberal values should, however, be a perennial activity of every university, irrespective of its courses of study. Even in institutions which are primarily concerned with training in professional skills, the inculcation of these values has to be promoted.
- (3) The preservation and communication of existing knowledge is an important function of the University. It is, however, essential to transform teaching from routine instruction to acquisition of knowledge by bringing about a living contact between students and teachers.
- (4) The University has also to advance the frontiers of knowledge. This has, however, to be done in combination with teaching. Experience has shown that these two activities communicate strength to each other and flourish in combination.
- (5) While many Indian Universities encourage the study of subjects like Indian languages, Indian history, Indian philosophy etc., they have, on the whole, failed to create a modern intellectual tradition of their own. Apart from imparting to their students an understanding of India's cultural heritage, universities in India should try to develop in them a modern Indian outlook. This requires a re-interpretation and

adaptation of our traditional values in the context of the contemporary situation.

- (6) Universities in developing countries like India have, firstly, to ensure that they reflect and respond to the life of the people living around them. It is mainly through the intellectual and moral leadership of our universities that a tradition-bound and stagnant society is to be transformed into a modern and progressive community. It should be considered obligatory on the part of the university to make an intensive study of problems faced by its neighbourhood as well as by the nation. Universities are expected to influence the thinking and planning activities of the government and other bodies.
- (7) A national outlook and purpose has also to be cultivated in our universities by a deliberate pursuit of national ends in preference to local interests. Universities as national institutions should devote themselves to a study of this problem in all its aspects.

The Education Commission (1964-65) laid stress on the social content, purpose and values of university education. In broad terms, these are as follows :

- (1) to seek and cultivate new knowledge, to engage vigorously and fearlessly in the pursuit of truth and to interpret old knowledge and beliefs in the light of new needs and discoveries ;
- (2) to provide the right kind of leadership in all walks of life, to identify gifted youth and help them develop their potential to the full by cultivating physical fitness, developing the powers of the mind and cultivating right interests, attitudes and moral and intellectual values ;
- (3) to provide society with competent men and women trained in agriculture, arts, medicine, science and technology and various other professions, who will also be cultivated individuals imbued with a sense of social purpose ;
- (4) to strive to promote equality and social justice and to reduce social and cultural differences through diffusion of education ; and



(5) to foster in the teachers and students, and through them in society generally, the attitudes and values needed for developing the 'good life' in individuals and society.

All these aims and objectives, as viewed by different authorities, agree on the basic values of university or higher education. Negatively, they agree that the production of competent graduates in arts, science, technology, medicine, engineering etc. does not exhaust the functions of a University. Positively, the Universities must create a national leadership in different spheres of activity and the basis for high intellectual traditions. The promotion of social values and virtues is also considered to be a primary responsibility of university education. In fact, judged by these standards, University education has still to make good in this country.

III

The Radhakrishnan Commission, 1948

It is now admitted in all hands that school education and university education are sharply differentiated. In the University, the Radhakrishnan Commission points out, "an undergraduate must expect to be treated as a grown-up person ; the formal discipline of the school must be loosened to give place to comparative freedom for the undergraduate to order his own life." For this reason, before a student enters upon the University stage and can profit by it, he must have attained a minimum maturity. This is to fit him not only for the kind of instruction that he is to receive at this stage but also to ensure that he has had a broad general education and proficiency in at least four subjects. According to this dictum, the age of entry to the University (degree course) should be, generally speaking, at least 18 ; or 16, when the student offers himself for enrolment in an intermediate course. It means, in modern times, that a student shall not be admitted to the first year of the Degree classes until he is 18 or the pre-university classes until he is at least 17. This point will be useful to remember.

Of course, the Commission endorses the recommendation of the Sadler Commission that the then intermediate classes should be taken away from the Universities and tagged on to the two top

classes of a high school to constitute an intermediate college to be placed under a Board of Secondary and Intermediate Examination. This is the stage that corresponds to the higher secondary stage. As the Commission states, "The intermediate college is to correspond to the *Realschule* or *Gymnasium* of Germany in which sound and liberal training is imparted to students and in which opportunities of higher secondary education are adapted to the needs of industry, commerce and agriculture as well as medicine and engineering in all its branches." The aim is to give a vocational bias to such education while imparting at the same time a sound general education as a preparation for entry to a University. And above all, and here the Sadler Commission is quoted, "the education should endeavour to give them, by such method and influences as it is free to use, a sure hold upon the principles of right and wrong and should teach them to apply those principles in their conduct."

It may be mentioned in this connection that though U.P. had her separate Intermediate Colleges, both in Bengal and South India, the Intermediate and the Degree courses formed part of a composite under-graduate course taught in the same College affiliated to the University. Radhakrishnan Commission apparently did not mind it.¹ What it wanted to be sure about was the improvement of secondary education. It said : "We have already lost 30 years by neglecting to raise the standards of our high schools and intermediate colleges and it is time we realised that our secondary education remains the weakest link in our educational machinery and needs urgent reform." One of the most important bottlenecks was the shortage of trained and qualified teachers—both in the secondary schools and in the intermediate colleges. In 1948, the training colleges in India could provide only about 1900 places against more than 3,500 applicants.

It was, however, not till 1952 that the Secondary Education Commission was appointed by the Government of India with Lakshmanaswami Mudaliar as President. Its report which came out in 1953 was a comprehensive attempt to tackle the problem of secondary education in all its aspects. For the first time what was once a

¹ See Report, Vol. I, Ch. 4, p. 93.



unilinear and predominantly academic course was to be substituted by a multi-purpose or diversified course which was given a vocational bias in so far as every candidate had to have some training in a craft from a list which included spinning and weaving, woodwork, metal work, gardening, tailoring, typography, workshop practice, sewing, needle-work and embroidery and modelling. Besides the crafts and the compulsory subjects, the elective courses were designed to offer seven "streams" or groups of subjects such as humanities, sciences, technical, commercial, agriculture, fine arts and home science. Each student would be required to select 3 of the subjects listed under each group. The idea evidently was to offer some scope of specialisation as well as to provide for some sort of integration within each stream. I have already subjected this kind of diversification at the secondary course to a critical review in a previous chapter.² It would be sufficient to record that the recommendations of the Secondary Education Commission were a distinct advance on the existing system. For those whose education would stop at the secondary stage, the recommendations were designed to build up certain skills, even though of an elementary standard, which could form the basis of further specialisation at a higher level. Actually, experience has shown that much of the training that a student receives in the technical or vocational stream is of such a poor quality or is so incomplete that the ground has to be traversed all over again in the courses provided by the specialised vocational schools or the polytechnics. Further, there seems to be no co-ordination between the enrolment in the different streams and the total intake of the several vocational or polytechnic institutions, with the result that a good many of the students have to turn to the general line and become maladjusted.

College Principals frequently complain that the students who come from the secondary schools are of rather poor material, judged by academic standards. One factor, the inefficiency of teaching due to the want of trained teachers together with the fact that men with high academic achievements are not attracted towards the teaching

² Chapter XII.



profession, has already been mentioned. The Radhakrishnan Commission found the main cause of the low standard of academic performance in the overcrowding of students in the affiliated colleges. They suggested a ceiling of 1,500 students for each college, more or less ; the Degree colleges affiliated to the Agra University were permitted 1,000 students apiece, while Lucknow and Allahabad were not to have more than 3,000 students in their Arts and Science departments.

One of the most important recommendations of the Radhakrishnan Commission was a 12-year school course (inclusive of the two-year Intermediate course). An Intermediate College, however, might be allowed to have 4 classes (classes IX-XII) or 6 classes (Classes VI to XII), instead of the existing two-year course at the college level. It was further proposed that a large number of occupational institutions should be opened to which students could be diverted for vocational training after 10 or 12 years of schooling.

About the curricular spread of the different stages of education, the Radhakrishnan Commission laid down three main types of higher education, namely, general education, liberal education and occupational education. According to the Commission it was the business of general education to make available to the student, and to inspire him to master, wisely selected information as to facts and principles so that he would have representative and useful data on which to base his thought, judgment and action and would be aware of fields of interest and importance. A general education, in other words, "should open windows in many directions" so that the varied experiences of a man's life and most elements of his environment "shall have meaning and interest to him." Such education must necessarily be selective. Liberal education, on the other hand, was "preparation of the student for independent thinking, for critical inquiry and appraisal, and for creative and constructive thought and action." It did not necessarily connote separate teaching programmes, or separate institutions. It stood for that spirit of liberal inquiry which should inspire all teaching. It would not, perhaps, be incorrect to say that while general education is opposed to specialization in its narrow, exclusive sense, liberal education was opposed to all forms of dogmatism, like that of the sage who was "the prisoner of his doctrines." Finally, occupational education included voca-



tional, technical and professional education. Such education prepared the student for his life work or for other specialised interests.

Apart from the 12-year school-cum-intermediate course, the Commission followed the Sadler Report in its recommendation for a 3-year Degree course. It would be seen that English as well as the "Federal" language or, if that happened to be the mother tongue, a classical or modern Indian language, were included in both B.A. and B.Sc. courses. In addition to these, Arts students as well as Science students should take up two elective subjects. It is curious that while the elective Arts subjects included Sociology, as a major Pass (as well as Honours) subject, Statistics and Demography as well as Physiology were omitted from the list of elective Science subjects. On the other hand, Geography and Anthropology were included under "Social Studies" which were available for Arts, and not for Science, students. For Arts students, subjects were divided under two group headings, namely, Social Studies consisting of seven and Humanities consisting of six subjects. Since an Arts student was expected to take at least one subject from each of the two groups, it appeared from the distribution of the subjects that while a combination like Mathematics (Humanities) and Anthropology (Social Studies) or Geography (Social Studies) was permitted, a combination of Sanskrit and Philosophy (both under Humanities) or of Mathematics and Philosophy, or of Sanskrit and History (for the same reason) or of Geography and Anthropology (both under Social Studies) were not permitted. Yet it is generally agreed that these are all useful combinations.

The total duration of the school and college courses, as already explained, would be 12 plus 3, or 15, years. Starting at 6, the student would have attained the age of 21 by the time he qualified for the first Degree. The longer duration could be justified on the ground that the general education courses would entail additional work. "Even this longer courses," the Commission pointed out, "will give to our University graduate a period of study shorter by one year than the graduate of a University in the United Kingdom or the United States" (*Report*, p. 134). The Commission would however, reduce the period of post-graduate study to one year (instead of the usual 2-year course) for Honours graduates. This also followed the recommendation of the Sadler Commission which the Radhakrishnan



Commission, reporting after 30 years, ruefully remarked, "was not put into effect." The latter pointed out that while even under the proposed extended duration of the school-cum-college course, an Indian student would take 15 years for the first Degree, a student in the U.K. as well as in the U.S.A. would take 16 years.

As regards training for the M.A. and M.Sc. degree, the three-fold object of this training, in the words of the Radhakrishnan Commission was (i) to train teachers for all levels of higher education, (ii) to train experts for many services in the non-academic fields such as Government, Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Public Welfare and (iii) to train research personnel. The Commission pointed out the variations in the duration of the courses. Calcutta at that time had a two-year post-graduate course after a two-year Degree course, both Pass and Honours. The two-year Honours degree was, however, considered as "not quite satisfactory." The three-year Honours Course has not, however, succeeded in all the Universities which had adopted it. In the view of the Commission, while the three-year course had succeeded in Madras and the Punjab, it had not been "so popular" at Lucknow and Allahabad. In some places, e.g. in Bombay (apart from the subject of Social Sciences), there was neither any organised teaching nor laboratory work and the student "is mostly left to fend for himself," with the result that he is "neither well-up in the fundamentals of his subject nor does he get any proper training in methods of research."

In some Universities, a student taking his first Degree (B.A. or B.Sc.) is given a research project for the Master's degree. On the other hand, the one-year course for the M.A. or M.Sc. degree varies in different Universities. At some places, the examination for the Degree is based entirely on a thesis, at others only on papers and at still others on papers and thesis combined. The common experience of teachers and examiners, the Commission stated, "is that M.A. and M.Sc. thesis, produced in a few months, are generally incomplete or unsatisfactory and are seldom worthy of publication". The Commission, accordingly, laid great stress on teaching as well as on advanced training into the methods of research but opines that it should not include actual research. The examination itself should be based on papers and a *viva voce* test. The classes should be small and admission should be guided by the candidate's over-all record



from the school to the Degree level. And as for the teacher, no one, the Commission held, should teach these classes unless he had himself been a successful researcher in his subject. The Commission in taking this view, rightly observed that the Post-graduate stage was "the apex of the University, responsible for the standards of intellectual life, for scholarship and scientific research."

The hard fact, however, struck the Commission that there were signs of a steady decline in the quality and quantity of research at our Universities. The Commission relied upon the report of the Scientific Man-Power Committee (1948) to point out that during the 10-year period preceding, there was an average output of 26 doctorates (Ph.D.'s and D.Sc.'s) only a year. Compared to Western standards, this was a rather poor performance. One reason for this was undoubtedly the fact that our Universities were unable to attract the more brilliant of our graduates as teachers because of the more attractive terms that they were (and are) able to secure in the administrative services or in business and commercial houses. Though some improvement has been effected in recent years in the scales of pay for our University teachers, we must not ignore the fact that there has been at the same time a considerable erosion in the value of the rupee due to persistent inflationary pressures which every year get worse with the result that the real income has actually been falling despite the increase in money incomes. At the same time the opportunities for employment in lucrative jobs—many of which are also challenging in their nature—that the operation of the Five-Year Plans has brought in its train have made the under-paid teacher's job suffer still more by comparison. The difficulties of procuring high-quality scientific equipment and research apparatus due to exchange difficulties and import restrictions have also operated as a deterrent factor in the progress of scientific research at the universities far more than it was in 1948 when the Commission reported. A further deterrent, which the Commission has also noted, is the fact that facilities for the publication of research works—most of which might not command sufficient sales to be commercially profitable—are greatly inadequate, particularly for works of a highly specialised nature. This defeats the very purpose of research, for a thesis which is unpublished does not fulfil its purpose—the advancement of knowledge.

The question of the pay-scales of those teachers who are employed in postgraduate work and in the affiliated Colleges deserve special mention. There is an irresistible case for a substantial upgrading of teachers' salaries all along the line. Our main concern in this chapter is with higher education. It is interesting to observe that the Scientific Man-Power Committee to which reference has already been made and which has been quoted by the Radhakrishnan Commission laid down the following scales of salary for teachers in University institutions, professional institutions and other post-graduate institutions⁴:

Professors (Senior)	Rs. 1,500-2,000 p.m.
Professors (Junior)	Rs. 1,000-1,500 p.m.
Readers, Asst. Professors and Senior Instructors	Rs. 750-1,200 p.m.
Senior Lecturers	Rs. 500- 750 p.m.
Junior Lecturers, Demonstrators etc.	Rs. 350- 600 p.m.

For Science Colleges, under-graduate standard, the Committee recommended the following scales:

Professors	Rs. 600-1,200 p.m.
Asst. Professors	Rs. 350- 850 p.m.
Lecturers, Demonstrators etc.	Rs. 250- 500 p.m.

The Radhakrishnan Commission, however, made the following recommendations in Chapter 3 of its Report:

(a) *University Teachers*

Professors	Rs. 900-50-1,350
Readers	Rs. 600-30-900
Lecturers	Rs. 300-25-600
Instructors or Fellows	Rs. 250
Research Fellows	Rs. 250-25-500

(b) *Affiliated Colleges with no post-graduate classes*

Lecturers	Rs. 200-15-320-20-400
Senior posts (two in each college)	Rs. 400-25-600
Principals	Rs. 500-40-800

* *Scientific Manpower Committee Report (1948), Chap. 7.*

(c) *Colleges with post-graduate classes*

Lecturers	.. ..	Rs. 200-15-320-20-400-25-500
Senior posts (two in each college)	.. ..	Rs. 500-25-800
Principals	.. ..	Rs. 800-40-1,000

The proportion of junior posts (lecturers and instructors) to senior ones (Professors and Readers), according to the Commission should be roughly 2 : 1. The age of retirement should be ordinarily 60 but extensions might be allowed up to the age of 64. Most Universities have now fixed the age of retirement at 65. The pay-scales have also been marked up, but, one must admit, not up to the point of satisfaction, judged by current needs.

IV

Types of Universities and Colleges

The following four types of Universities have developed in this country, namely, the unitary teaching Universities ; federative teaching Universities ; teaching and affiliating Universities ; and purely affiliating Universities. Of the 62 Universities functioning in 1964, only two—Bombay and Kerala—were listed as Federal and Teaching, 35 were listed as Teaching and Affiliating, and only one as purely Affiliating. The rest were described as " Residential and Teaching " which corresponded to the Unitary-Teaching type. The Universities under the Act of 1857 were all of the affiliating type.

A unitary type teaching University is, as its name implies, a single unit as against the federal or federative type in which a group of colleges, administered separately, are the component or constituent Units. In a Unitary-teaching type, all the students are taught in the same institution sharing the advantages of " a coherent corporate life " in which both students and teachers participate. In a federative type, there are, in addition to the University itself, a number of colleges, each with its own teaching staff and student body. Instruction in the common or more general of the subjects is given in the colleges. The rarer or more specialised subjects are taught either by the University in central departments by its own staff ; or, by agreement between the colleges, one college can provide

the course in such a subject or subjects for students of other colleges as well. "The essential thing for the success of the federative plan," says the Radhakrishnan Commission, "is that the college teachers must not be a subordinate class." In Oxford and Cambridge, they form the bulk of the University teaching staff. The typical staff of a University Department will, therefore, be a Professor, a Reader or Readers, who confine themselves to the University classes, and a teaching staff consisting of teachers who will be both University lecturers and college teachers. For example, in the Calcutta University, which is of the affiliating-cum-teaching type, there are many departments which have a large complement of teachers drawn from the affiliated colleges who work on a part-time basis. To that extent, it may also be regarded as a federative type, but for the fact that the large number of colleges in the muffassil areas do not have any share in post-graduate teaching. Also, since the University itself carries a large teaching staff of its own, the opportunities of college teachers, except where they are specialists in their own fields and possess first class or doctoral degrees, to participate in University teaching are severely limited. It is, however, rare for one College to entertain students from other Colleges to attend classes along with its own students in any subject. Apart from inter-collegiate rivalry, such an arrangement is not practicable due to the limited number of seats in the Honours classes or in the science laboratories. Besides, the over-all roll-strength of the bigger colleges in Calcutta has recently been drastically reduced to prevent over-crowding. So far as the purely affiliating type of University is concerned, this is now on the way out. There is no doubt that had this type not been adopted in 1857, on the model of the University of London which itself soon discarded the plan, the educational progress of India would have been much more rapid.

Colleges in India also present a variety of types. There are, in the first place, the Government Colleges, the favoured few. The teachers of these colleges are, on the average, better paid, enjoy larger benefits, have a lighter work-load, than those of the non-Government colleges. Nor do these (Government) colleges have to depend for their maintenance on the precarious fee-income from their students. The courses of study prescribed for different examinations, the respective limits of the syllabus, text books, the minimum requirements as to the number



of lectures to be delivered in each subject as well as the percentage of attendance of the students—all these are, of course, prescribed by the University to which all affiliated Colleges must conform. Besides these, minimum standards are also set for class-room space as well as laboratory space for each student. The list of instruments and apparatuses and other equipment to be maintained by colleges in respect of science teaching as well as library books are also prescribed by the University. The other type of colleges, the private or non-Government colleges, heavily outnumber the State colleges. In fact, State colleges in India are supposed to set standards of performance or serve as "model" colleges for the rest, where quality and not quantity, is meant to be the guiding principle. These private colleges, again, are of different varieties. There are Colleges which appear to be almost proprietary in their character. There are also colleges which are governed by a "registered" society, or a board of trustees, or even by a religious, denominational or humanitarian mission. The Christian Church, we have already seen, has played a very prominent part, in the evolution of collegiate education in India. All these Colleges are, subject to University Rules and Regulations, more or less autonomous in their management. There is, as a result, large variations in the matter of teachers' pay-scales, service conditions, course offerings including facilities for Honours courses, tuition fees etc. Since it is usually difficult for a College to make both ends meet with the help of its own resources, it has to seek assistance from external sources. These may be generous endowments by private patrons, by the University, by a Grants Committee, or by the State itself. These grants-in-aid are a convenient device for enforcing at least some conformity to standards and efficiency of management as well as a certain uniformity in pay, emoluments and service conditions of the teachers. On the other hand, such control, through what may be called "money-power," may seriously undermine the autonomy of the Colleges and make their working rigid and inflexible. To obviate these difficulties, it might be wise to rout all financial assistance through an autonomous Grants Committee to be established in each State on the lines of the University Grants Commission set up at the Centre.

The keynote of the University organization is set by the academic standing and personality of the Vice-Chancellor. How is he



to be appointed ? The Radhakrishnan Commission thought the practice of appointing part-time honorary Vice-Chancellors a "disastrous folly". It laid down, instead, the following procedure. The Executive should select only one man for the high office and the proceedings should be kept secret. The name of the person selected should be sent to the Chancellor who will, thereupon, appoint him. The whole idea of any one "standing as a candidate" should be rejected. The Vice-Chancellor, the Commission recommended, should be appointed for a period of 6 years and should not be eligible for re-appointment. He should be a full-time paid officer.

Regarding the organization of the University bodies, there should be the Senate (Court), the Executive Council (Syndicate), the Academic Council, Faculties and Boards of Studies.

The Senate, whether in a Unitary type of University or in a Federative type, should consist of not more than 100 members divided more or less equally between what would be called its internal membership and external members. Of the 50 external members, 10 should be elected by the Alumni Association, 5 by donors, 12 should come in as representatives of professions, industry and commerce, 3 should be public officials including the Director of Public Instruction and 10 nominated by the Chancellor, while the Senate itself should have the power to co-opt 10 additional members. This composition would hold good both for Unitary and Federative Universities. The Syndicate, however, would be differently constituted in these two types of Universities, though the total number of members was fixed at 20 in either case. In the case of the Unitary Universities, the Syndicate would include the Vice-Chancellor, the Treasurer, 8 Deans, one member of staff with special responsibility for residential life, 4 elected by the members of the Senate from among their own members, one nominated by the Provincial High Court, one nominated by the Public Service Commission and 3 nominated by the Chancellor. In the case of the Federative University, the total number of Syndicate members also was fixed at 20 to be composed of as follows : Vice-Chancellor, the Treasurer, 7 Deans, 2 Principals of Constituent colleges, 4 elected by the Senate from among its own members, one nominee of the High Court, one nominee of the Public Service Commission and 3 nominees of the Chancellor.



So far as the teaching-cum-affiliative type of Universities was concerned, there was some change in the pattern of membership due to the existence of the affiliated colleges. Thus the Senate, or Court, would (on the basis of 20 affiliated colleges) had a maximum membership of 120 including 40 representing the affiliated Colleges.⁵ Another 40 would be University representatives. The remaining 40 would include 10 from the Alumni Association, 5 from Donors (elected), 10 representatives of professions, industry and commerce, 3 public officials, 6 nominees of the Chancellor and 6 to be co-opted by the University. The Syndicate membership would also be somewhat larger, but would not be allowed to exceed 25. These would include, besides the Vice-Chancellor and the Treasurer, 6 Deans, 4 Principals of Affiliated Colleges, 4 elected by the Senate, 1 nominee of the High Court, 1 of the Public Service Commission, and 3 to be the nominees of the Chancellor. All members other than the *ex-officio* members should hold office for 3 years while the elected members should be eligible to hold office for "two periods."

The Academic Council, suggested by the Commission, would, as its name implied, consist of academic persons. It would be a body to co-ordinate the Faculties. In the case of the unitary type of University, the membership of the Academic Council should not exceed 40 while in the case of the federative type and the teaching-and-affiliative type, the number of members of the Council should not exceed 45. In the latter case (teaching and affiliative type), the membership should include all University Heads of Departments, 6 Principals of affiliated colleges, 5 University teachers, 10 teachers of affiliated Colleges and not more than 4 persons with expert or specialised knowledge to be co-opted by the Council. The Boards of Studies should have one Chairman (*i.e.* the Head of the University Department concerned *ex-officio*), and 9 members, consisting of 4 University teachers of the subject and 5 teachers (of the subject) from the affiliated colleges.

The Commission made another important recommendation : the setting up of Provincial " Grants Allocation Committee " con-

⁵ These should include principals of each college as well as representatives of its Governing Body. Presumably there would be no teacher representatives.



sisting of one whole-time Chairman, 2 other non-official members and one representative each from the Ministries of Education and Finance.

V

The Education Commission (1964-66)

It has been a frequent experience in India that before the country settles down to consider and implement the recommendations of an expert body appointed to advise the Government on a vital and complicated problem at considerable expense to the public exchequer, and after much palaver, another Government on assuming office, or even the same Government after an interval, orders another enquiry which, while being entrusted with some additional point or topics for investigation, has necessarily to cover a good deal of the ground already dealt with by the previous enquiries. The Radhakrishnan Commission (1948) and the Mudaliar Commission (1953), between them, had covered the entire ground of secondary and university education and made sweeping recommendations for educational reconstruction in these two fields. Many of the recommendations have, no doubt, been accepted while many others have not. The appointment in 1964 of another enquiry under the distinguished chairmanship of Dr. D. S. Kothari would naturally require some justification.

So far as the Radhakrishnan Commission was concerned, it was principally concerned with the reorganisation of Indian Universities. Moreover, its recommendations were submitted before the regime of the five-year plans had started. A new national pattern was emerging and new issues were claiming attention. The Three-Year Degree course had already been introduced. So also the eleven-class higher secondary schools. Both were introduced in an experimental mood. Not all universities had accepted the Three-Year Degree course. There were also considerable variations in the total duration of the school course with consequent variations in courses. In the field of elementary education also, we had and still have two parallel sets of institutions, namely, the basic schools and the primary schools. Though there has been a large relative increase in the number and



enrolment of the basic schools, they had, by and large, failed to make the expected impact on the educational set up for our children. Taking the field of education as a whole, there were persistent problems of proper adjustment and coordination of the different stages of education, of redefinition of the aims and the motivations of each stage, and behind them all was the compelling necessity of a new orientation of the educational system to subserve national interests.

It is in the context of these considerations that the appointment of the Education Commission in 1964 should be considered. The Commission was appointed by a Government Resolution dated July 14, 1964, "to survey and examine the entire field of education in order to realise within the shortest possible period a well-balanced, integrated and adequate system of national education capable of making a powerful contribution to all spheres of national life". The Commission argued the following points in justification of a fresh investigation into the pattern and problems of the entire field of education (excluding professional education such as medicine, law, etc.) as they existed and as they should be in future :—

(1) The attempt to create a new social order based on freedom, equality and justice can only succeed if a traditional educational system was revolutionised both in content and extent.

(2) In spite of the quantitative expansion of education at all levels, there is widespread dissatisfaction about several aspects of educational development. For instance, it has not yet been possible to provide free and universal education for all children upto 14 years of age. The problem of mass illiteracy continues to be immense. It has not been possible to raise standards adequately at the secondary and university stages. The diversification of curricula in secondary and higher education has not kept pace with present day needs, so that the problem has been intensified on the one hand while, on the other, there is an equally acute shortage of trained man-power in several sectors. In short, qualitative improvements in education have not kept pace with quantitative expansion, and national policies and programmes concerning the quality of education, even when these were well conceived and generally agreed to, could not be implemented satisfactorily.

(3) It is desirable to survey the entire field of educational development as the various parts of the educational system strongly

interact with and influence one another. What is needed, therefore, is a synoptic survey and an imaginative look at education considered as a whole and not fragmented into parts or stages.

(4) While the planning of education for India must necessarily emanate from Indian experience and conditions, it would be advantageous to draw upon the experience and thinking of educationists and scientists from other parts of the world in the common enterprise of seeking for the right type of education which is the quest of all mankind, specially at this time, when the world is becoming closely knit together in so many ways. For this purpose, some eminent scientists and educationists from other countries would be associated with the Commission as members or as consultants.

(5) The Commission will advise Government on the national pattern of education and on the general principles and policies for the development of education at all stages and in all its aspects.

In short, the main task of the Commission was to view education as a whole and to invest it with a national purpose. For this reason the Commission's terms of reference included all the stages of education from the pre-school to the university including technical and adult education. We are here concerned with that part of its Report which is concerned with university education including collegiate education. We have already discussed the objectives of higher education as the Commission views it. Among the responsibilities with which the Commission would charge the universities are : they must learn to serve as the conscience of the nation, and from this point of view they should encourage individuality, variety and dissent within a climate of tolerance ; they should develop programmes of adult education in a big way ; they should assist the schools in their attempts at qualitative self-improvement ; they should try to improve standards all round by a symbiotic development of teaching and research ; and they should create at least a few centres which would be comparable to those of their type in any part of the world and thus help to bring back a 'centre of gravity' of Indian academic life within the country itself. In accordance with these principles and objectives and to realise the same, the Commission accorded high priority to the following aspects of the programme, namely, (1) a radical improvement in the quality and standards of higher education and research, (2) expansion of higher education to meet



the man-power needs of national development and to some extent the existing social ambitions and expectations of the people and (3) improvement of university organisation and administration.

It will be seen that these programmes, between them, cover almost all the urgent problems that face higher education in our country today. Further, it is for the first time that a high authority has been charged with the duty, on the one hand of relating higher education to its employment value and, on the other, to make it the logical apex of a well co-ordinated system of national education. This is a departure from the orthodox concept of university education. The cold fact remains that a university alumnus cannot afford to live in an ivory tower devoted to abstract speculation. He has now to face the hard realities of life, and to help the country face to same, in this highly competitive world. The preference for "white collar" jobs must give way to a willingness to shoulder the responsibility of leading the country through a technological revolution. An excessive dependence on education in the liberal arts in the past—a tradition which even now persists among large classes of graduates—has accentuated the problem of what is called 'educated unemployment'; while, at the other end, there is a shortage of technical skill, of experts and specialists, in various branches of trade, industry and commerce. The problem of relating education to employment is one of the most crucial problems facing our educational planners today.

An interesting, though controversial, issue raised by the Commission is its proposal to develop some 'major universities' where first class post-graduate work and research would be possible and whose standards would be comparable to those of the best institutions of their type in any part of the world. The Kothari Commission would like the University Grants Commission to select, as soon as possible, from amongst the existing universities, about six universities (including one of the Indian Institutes of Technology and one Agricultural University) for development as "major universities". Such universities should have "a critical mass" of students and teachers of outstanding capacity and promise. The Commission would like to see "clusters of advanced centres" in the major universities which would help to promote inter-disciplinary approach towards higher study and research, one of which at least should concentrate on an inter-disciplinary approach to education. These centres of



advanced study should be instrumental in creating an intellectually effective community in which all the departments of the University concerned could participate ; they should also seek to bring the relevant teachers of their affiliated colleges into closer contact with their work. The entire cost, both capital and recurring, should be borne by the University Grants Commission.

As regards universities other than "major" universities, the question, as the Education Commission views it, is that of establishing a link with the major universities. The latter should be utilised to provide teachers of quality to the other universities as well as to the affiliated colleges. Effort should be made to induce talented students from the major universities to join the teaching profession and to place a majority of them in other universities and colleges so that they could help raise standards. Also, in order to attract outstanding persons to the teaching profession, the University Grants Commission should sponsor a scheme for instituting a number of fellowships at three levels—Lecturers, Readers and Professors. These persons should be seconded to work in suitable Departments of Universities until a place is found for them. The universities which are not major universities should also be helped to improve their students which would qualify them to special grants from the University Grants Commission. These universities should also be helped through concentration of resources to develop excellence in selected departments and ultimately to raise them to the level of Centres of Advanced Studies.

With the Commission's zeal for quality, a recommendation has been made that affiliated colleges might also be classified on the basis of their performance and that assistance should be related to such classification. Where there is an outstanding college (or a small cluster of very good colleges) within a large university which has shown the capacity to improve itself markedly, consideration should be given to granting it an 'autonomous' status. This would involve the power to frame its rules of admission, to prescribe its courses of study, even to conduct examinations, the role of the parent university being more or less restricted to general supervision and the actual conferment of degrees.

A problem which has recently raised a good deal of controversy is that of the medium of instruction for collegiate and university



education. The Commission is quite emphatic that "as a part of the development of education in our country we have to move energetically in the direction of adopting the regional languages as media of instruction at the university stage and that careful preparation should be made for the purpose, that both the manner and the time of transition would have to be left for decision to the university system." Since, in recent months, there seems to be some hurry in forcing this change, it is necessary that we should acquaint ourselves fully with the views of the Commission. These views are set forth in paragraph 11.58 of their Report. These are as follows :

- (1) The medium of class room communication and examination should generally be the same. If the student can be expected to express himself in the regional language in his examination, it should not normally be difficult for a teacher to do the same in the class room. In fact, the student's understanding of the fundamental problems and issues would be better and his performance in the examination would improve if, in all cases where the universities have taken a decision to adopt the regional languages as media of examinations, they also decide to adopt them as normal media of class room communication. However, it must be remembered that the hold of English as a medium in the universities is linked with the use of the regional languages as the languages of administration in the States.
- (2) While the goal is to adopt the regional languages as media of education, this does not involve elimination of English. In fact, English, as an important 'library language' would play a vital role in higher education. No students should be considered as qualified for a degree, in particular a Master's degree, unless he has acquired a reasonable proficiency in English (or in some other 'library language'). The implications of these are two-fold : all teachers in higher educational institutions should be essentially bilingual in the sense that they would be able to teach in the regional language and in English, and all students (and particularly post-graduate students) should be able to follow lectures and use reading materials in the regional language, as well as in English,

- (3) At the earlier stage of the undergraduate course, it will be an advantage of the bulk if the classwork is done through the regional language. As one goes higher up the educational ladder and as the student's command over English and his familiarity with its use as the medium of education increases, more and more of the classwork could be in English. At the post-graduate stage, at least for sometime to come, the bulk of the classwork will have to be in English.
- (4) In so far as colleges teaching through the media of modern Indian languages other than the language of the area are concerned, there need be no obligation on the State to provide such institution, except in cases where an adequate number of students is available. But if any linguistic minority group offers to maintain such an institution, it should be permitted and admissible grants given to it. It would be desirable to establish centres of advanced study for the development of modern Indian languages so as to make them fit media for higher education.*

A little reflection on these recommendations will show that a good deal of the public controversy in regard to the language question rests on an incomplete understanding of the Commission's proposals. The Commission has not recommended that the regional language should completely replace English. The Commission indeed visualises that a good deal of classwork at the undergraduate as well as the post-graduate stages would be done in English, that no student should be qualified for a degree unless he has acquired "a reasonable proficiency" in English and that teachers in higher education should have to be "essentially bilingual" while students should be able to follow lectures in both the languages. Nor has the Commission ignored the case of the linguistic minorities.

What is likely to cause concern is that in making the above recommendations the Commission appears to fall between two stools. On close analysis, the Commission's recommendations would suggest that the members were not sure in their minds about the extent to which they could go in making the regional language a medium of

* Education Commission (1964-66) Report, pp. 291-92. See also pages 13-16.



education up to the post-graduate stage. The bilingual teacher, the provision of lectures in regional language with the permission to get classwork done in English, the insistence on "a reasonable proficiency in English" as a condition precedent to qualifying for the Master's degree, and the retention of English as a "library language"—all these suggest that the members of the Commission were desperately trying to reconcile the claims of the regional language and of English to be the medium of education at the higher stages of education, ultimately arriving at a compromise formula. On the other hand, it might be considered that this compromise formula is based on a realistic appraisal of the objective situation in the country. For instance, the concept of English as a 'library language' underlines the paucity of books and journals of the requisite standard in the Indian languages. English, it is to be noted, is also sought to be retained as a link language with the world of scholarship outside India.

VI

The Three-Year Degree Course

The existing pattern of under-graduate education is based on a three-year course for the first Degree. Up to 1947, the pattern of undergraduate education was more or less uniform throughout the country. The total course extended over four years of which the first two comprised what was known as the intermediate course followed by a public examination. Students passing this examination took a further two-year course to qualify for the first Degree. The first university to give effect to the Sadler Commission's scheme was the Dacca University which introduced a three-year degree course in 1923 with certain modifications. The Delhi University followed in 1941. The Universities of Mysore and Travancore also tried a three-year course but subsequently gave it up. In 1944, the Central Advisory Board of Education suggested the abolition of the intermediate course and the introduction of the three-year degree course. As we have already seen, the Radhakrishnan Commission also recommended a three-year Degree course preceded by a twelve-year school course. That Commission also recommended that higher



education should be included within the Concurrent Legislative List. The Central Advisory Board of Education appointed a Survey Committee to consider these recommendations. The C.A.B. at its meeting held in February, 1954, accepted the report of the Survey Committee which recommended an eleven-year school course to be followed by the three-year degree course. The next body to consider the question was the Secondary Education Commission which recommended a twelve-year school course of which the last four years (Class IX to XII) should form the "higher secondary" stage. The first year of the existing two-year intermediate course was to be taken out of the college and added to the school course which would form Class XII of the higher secondary stage. The other year of the intermediate course should be added to the two-year degree course to convert it into a three-year course. A Conference attended by the Vice-Chancellors of the Universities and the Presidents of Secondary Education Boards was called in New Delhi in January, 1955, to consider the question. The Conference recommended that the period of secondary education should extend up to the age 17 of a student after which he would be eligible to join the three-year degree course. The following year, the C.A.B. recommended that the three-year degree course be introduced while the Education Ministry agreed to bear the additional cost involved in the change-over to the new scheme. The University of Calcutta accepted the scheme at a meeting of the Senate held on the 30th March, 1957, after considerable hesitation and anxious discussion.

In commending the three-year degree course, the Estimates Committee of the Indian Parliament (1958) delivered itself as follows : "While the three-year degree course is introduced, steps should be taken to improve the quality of collegiate education in general. For this purpose, from the grants available, it is necessary to revise syllabuses, introduce General Education Courses, reduce overcrowding in colleges, improve the teacher-pupil ratio, strengthen laboratories, replenish libraries and, wherever possible, institute the tutorial system." Subsequent pronouncements by higher authorities also confirm the view that the main object behind the new scheme was to improve collegiate education and that this involved certain ancillary measures for the improvement of teaching standards, better teacher-student relation, improvement of libraries and laboratories and



greater amenities for students. To this purpose, overcrowding in colleges has been reduced and an optimum figure of enrolment prescribed (800-1000 students in Arts and Science Colleges). At the same time the University Grants Commission has made substantial grants for various purposes calculated to improve collegiate education. The present position is that all the Universities in India (with the exception of those in Uttar Pradesh and of Bombay) have switched over to the three-year degree course. In Uttar Pradesh and Bombay, the four-year course (2 years Intermediate and 2 years Degree) is still continued. Some other Universities are also thinking of reverting to the earlier four-year course.

The Education Commission has assumed a flexible attitude in regard to proposals relating to the under-graduate as well as post-graduate courses. It says, however that the duration of the first Degree course "should not be *less* than three years." Apart from this the Commission would allow a certain flexibility about the duration of the courses in higher education. These, the Commission says, may vary from university to university and even in the same university from subject to subject. This presumably means that a four-year course, at least in certain subjects (Honours) is not ruled out. In fact, the Commission itself suggests that a beginning might be made with the organisation of four-year special courses for the first Degree in selected subjects. The first year of these courses may be the same as the first year of the present three-year course. But students will be selected, at the end of that year, for admission to a further three-year special course leading to what it describes as "the first (special) degree" in the subjects. It is already understood that one or two universities have experimented with a four-year honours course in certain subjects. In the case of the post-graduate degree, the Commission suggests that the duration of courses may be "*two or three years.*" It recommends that in some universities, strong graduate schools providing a three-year M.A./M.Sc./M.Com. degree course may be established in certain subjects and that for convenience, these courses may be designated as honours courses or given some other suitable name.

Leaving aside for the time being the question of extending the period of the degree course to four years in special cases, it is necessary to refer to some of the difficulties that have been experienced

since the introduction of three-year degree course. The success of the new experiment depended on whether the new arrangements would lead to an improvement in the quality of collegiate education. Reference has already been made to the unsatisfactory nature of the pre-University course. This course was admittedly in the nature of an interim measure. Until all the ten-class schools were upgraded to eleven-class schools, there would be two streams of students, one passing out of the ten-class schools and the other out of the new eleven-class higher secondary schools, ready to join colleges. While the higher secondary students would, after successfully completing their school education, straightaway join the three-year degree course, students passing out of ten-class schools would require one year's further study before they could be eligible to join the degree course. The pre-University class was a sort of stop-gap arrangement for this latter group of students. In actual practice, this pre-University course could provide effective teaching for about five months in the year. Even now in most of the colleges, courses cannot be finished and there occurs every year a huge percentage of failure at the P.U. examination. Thus, in the Calcutta University, in 1962, when the pre-University examinations were held for the first time, the percentage of pass in the P.U. (Arts) was 50.1 and P.U. (Science) 42.1. In 1963, the respective figures were 45.6 and 48 ; in 1964, 53.3 and 42.3 and 1965, 49 and 45.3. It would appear that these figures compare favourably with the corresponding figures of the old I.A. and I.Sc. examinations but then these latter examinations covered a very much larger number of "private" or non-collegiate candidates. During the five years 1957-1961, the percentage of pass at the Intermediate examination in Arts averaged 41 and that at the Intermediate examination in Science averaged 46.5. It was found from experience that wherever there was a higher secondary school in the vicinity, guardians preferred to place their wards in those schools. Students turned up at the ten-class schools, not so much by choice as by necessity. Usually, the better class students joined the higher secondary schools. Moreover, there were sharp differences in the respective curricula of these two types of schools. Nor was there any proper adjustment between the courses and the methods of teaching followed in the higher secondary schools and the pre-University classes of a college. The result was that in the first year of the



three-year degree course there were two types of students with different standards of achievement which naturally affected teaching standards also in the colleges. An early escape from this confusing situation is even now not in sight. What was intended to be a temporary arrangement has subsequently become an established part of the present scheme. The reason, of course, is the failure of the Government to upgrade all the ten-class schools to the higher secondary status during the last ten years. Taking the whole of India, barely one-third of the schools have been so upgraded. In West Bengal, the number of students appearing at the School Final Examination has passed 1,00,000 mark. The percentage of failure at this examination is not only much more than in the higher secondary examinations⁷, it is very much more than in the now defunct matriculation examination. The objective of improving the standard of collegiate or university education still remains a distant goal because, among other reasons, of the poor base on which it is built up.

One of the requirements of the new education policy was to reduce overcrowding in colleges to bring down the total enrolment of a college to a maximum of 1000 with some relaxation in the case of specially large colleges, so as to improve the teacher-pupil ratio to roughly one teacher for 20 students, if not less. The object was laudable. But in actual practice it has turned out to be a thoroughly unsatisfactory proceeding. In Calcutta, for instance, where overcrowding of colleges had become almost endemic—one college alone had 13,000 students on its rolls in three separate buildings working in 8 shifts in all—the total number of students rendered “surplus” due to the policy of restriction of roll-strength was about 16,000. This represented the excess intake of 7 big colleges in Calcutta which, between them, accounted for almost 75 per cent of the total enrolment of all Calcutta colleges (Arts, Science and Commerce). For these 16,000 students, at least 16 colleges would have been necessary. These colleges would also have to absorb

⁷ In 1964, the percentage of pass at the School Final examination in West Bengal was 25.83 while that in the Higher Secondary was 57.2. Of course in the S.F. examination there was a large number of “private” candidates who naturally pulled down the percentage of pass.



a good number of the natural increase in the number of students of at least 5000 a year as estimated by the Phillips Committee of the University Grants Commission. The Commission had, indeed, recommended that these students should be absorbed either in other colleges which had vacant places or in new colleges to be started with government help. No doubt a few colleges were started but their number was inadequate to cater to the needs of the displaced students and at the same to absorb the natural increase in the number of students seeking admission to the Degree course. In fact, the Calcutta University did grant new application to 15 colleges during the three years 1961-62 to 1963-64 but their total intake turned out to be woefully short of the required target.

Nor was sufficient weight given to the question of the number of courses offered by the new colleges *vis-a-vis* the older colleges most of which offered a larger choice of courses including Honours courses. Take for instance, the Asutosh College in Calcutta which offers Honours courses in as many as 14 subjects and has a competent staff ; is it any wonder that students who wanted to take up an Honours course would turn to this College ? Again, as most of the new colleges were started in more or less outlying areas (or in district or sub-divisional towns), it was not convenient for a large majority of the students living in Calcutta to join these colleges which would have meant a lot of additional expense in the shape of transport costs or the cost of residential accommodation near the colleges.* The limited number of subjects and the paucity of Honours courses in these new colleges created an educationally undesirable situation.

The cumulative effect of these difficulties and deficiencies was that the main objectives of the three-year Degree course failed to be realised in full. On second thoughts it would appear, however, that the failure of the experiment was really not due to the intrinsic deficiencies of the three-year Degree course itself but the way in which it was sought to be implemented without due consideration being given to the various aspects of the scheme. For one thing, there was no

* Of the 20 new Colleges (Arts, Science and Commerce) started during the five years 1959-60 to 1963-64, there were as many as 17 which had an enrolment of less than 300 each. Some of them had less than 100 students on the rolls.



adequate preparation for the new adventure. One of the main hurdles was finance. For instance, if the elevation of the ten-class schools to the higher secondary stage could be fully achieved, one of the bones of contention, the pre-University class, could have been removed. The academic short-sightedness of the Government departments was also partially responsible for the failure of the experiment to fulfil the expectations of the reformers. The Government, particularly in West Bengal, chose to follow a miserly policy in the matter of strengthening and improving the quality of the teaching cadres. The University Grants Commission, no doubt, gave a small lead by recommending revised scales of pay for the teachers of affiliated Colleges and fixed a minimum starting pay. It committed itself to the extent of meeting the difference between the existing pay-scales in the Colleges and the revised scale in respect of each whole-time teacher, either confirmed and holding a substantive post, or on probation in such a post, for a period of five years only, after which the commitment would be transferred to the State Governments concerned on a "maintenance" basis. Ordinary lecturers were given a scale of Rs. 200-500, the maximum to be reached in about 20 years' time. Senior Lecturers whose number was fixed at 20 per cent of the total strength of the teaching staff in the College concerned, were given a pay scale of Rs. 300-600 while heads of departments employing 4 (later on 5) or more teachers were given a pay-scale of Rs. 400-700. It would be seen that though the revised pay scale of the heads of departments was relatively not too bad, that of the lecturers, junior or senior, was poor even by current standards, though it was somewhat better than the prevailing rates. Further, the University Grants Commission had recommended that there should be at least four teachers in each Honours department. The Government, however, have consistently failed to sanction additional funds for this purpose with the result that even now most of the private affiliated colleges under the Calcutta University have to teach an eight-paper Honours subject with only three teachers. These teachers have also to take in addition the pre-University and the pass (degree) classes. The total work-load per teacher has varied from 22 to 24 periods a week. Moreover, the Government's refusal to consider itself as committed to the University Grants Commission scales of pay in respect of new appointees unless their cases were specially



processed at the Writers' Buildings not only interfered with the autonomy of the affiliated Colleges but was also academically unsound. It may be mentioned in this connection that all new appointments are subject to the approval of the University. Official processing at the bureaucratic level was thus not only redundant and incompetent but, because it was a time consuming process, it created a good deal of frustration among the staff concerned and adversely affected the recruitment of suitably qualified staff. How, under such circumstances, an appreciable improvement in standards is to be effected is anybody's guess. In fact, standards appear to have actually deteriorated.

May be, under the fourth Five Year plan, things will improve. But the time lag between pious resolutions and their eventual fulfilment is as imponderable to anticipate as it would be devastating in its effect. For instance, speaking of West Bengal, it is now more than 3 years since the last revision of pay-scales of teachers was announced by the Centre and though the Government of West Bengal communicated its acceptance of the revised scale, certain representations for modification of the proposed pay-scales made by the West Bengal College and University Teachers' Association (WBCUTA) appear to be taking an unconscionably long time for consideration and implementation. Meanwhile, the morale of the teachers is steadily going down while prices keep on going up. It would be pertinent to ask if this is the way in which the quality of education is sought to be improved. Personally, the author feels that as suggested by the WBCUTA a uniform scale of Rs. 300-950 per month for all teacher with provision for an allowance for heads of departments in addition to their basic pay within this scale, is a good idea. Teachers with an outstanding scholastic record or all-India reputation might be given a number of advance increments in the scale to start with. An undue prolongation of the period of waiting is bound to complicate matters. Prices of essential commodities have already advanced beyond the level prevailing when the proposals were mooted and the situation goes on deteriorating. Some interim relief has no doubt been given in the shape of additional dearness allowance and *ad hoc* payments, but the prospect of an early fulfilment of the Government's commitments in respect of the improved pay-scales, is at the time of writing, not yet in sight. A situation similar to



this is brewing in other States as well. Education has now become a commodity of the market place. What price education?—is the unspoken question agitating the minds of all concerned.

Apart from the human material, the king-pin of all schemes of improvement is finance. It is true that in certain schemes—adult education, for instance—voluntary service goes a long way towards contributing to their success. There are examples of missionary effort which has brought enlightenment and relief to thousands of men and women with the help of private charity and benevolence and on the basis of the selfless service of the missionary workers and helpers. These are, however, exceptional cases. National advancement involves a large-scale simultaneous attack on many fronts. It requires the sinews of war in an abundant measure. In fact the nation has been making heroic efforts to find the money for financing a huge plan of national development. This is reflected in the increasing tempo of investments in the successive plans of development. Due to our scarce resources, and in spite of generous aid from friendly countries, a self-generating economy is still to be achieved. Till then a system of rigid priorities has to be fixed. The people, no doubt, appreciate it and have, in national interest, subjected themselves to an austere way of life. But it is discouraging to see that education is being treated as an item of low priority. Thus, out of a total public investment of Rs. 16,000 crores provided for in the draft fourth Five-Year Plan (before its recent drastic revision) a sum of Rs. 1,200 crores had been set apart for investment in education in the public sector and an estimated Rs. 90 crores in the private sector. On the basis of a total estimated expenditure of Rs. 23,750 crores on the fourth Plan, that on education constitutes less than 6 per cent of the total investment and about 7.5 per cent of the total investment in the public sector. Of the amount of Rs. 1,300 crores provided for education (of all types), a sum of Rs. 132.45 crores has been provided for University education. The disappointment of educationists at this poor provision for education in its highest stage—the stage that is expected to produce the leadership of the country in every field—can be well appreciated. The revised Fourth Plan has made still more drastic cuts in the allotments for education. Nor is the situation any better so far as the normal Education Budget is concerned. In the budget of the Union Government, Education

constituted about 8 per cent of the total estimates for 1966-67. In 1950-51, the percentage was 11. Of course, even at 8 per cent, the estimated expenditure on social welfare in 1966-67 would be about Rs. 200 crores more than in 1950-51 ; the point at issue is that it has come down in the order of priorities. Even in absolute terms, the estimated expenditure for 1966-67 was actually less than the revised estimates for 1965-66 by as much as Rs. 18.50 crores. Here, then, is an additional ground for scepticism as to how, in this situation, a substantial improvement in educational standards can be expected.

VII

Higher Education : Policy of Expansion or Consolidation ?

The following table shows the number of institutions of higher education of different categories in India and direct expenditure on the same :

TABLE

Type of institution	1950-51	1955-56	1961-62
1. Universities	27	32	46
2. Boards of Education	7	11	13
3. Research Institutions	18	34	45
4. Special Education Colleges	92	112	222
5. Professional and Technical Colleges	208	346	962
6. Arts and Science Colleges	498	712	1,139
7. No. of students on the rolls	4,03,519	6,81,179	10,36,109
8. No. of teachers	24,453	37,865	67,068
9. Direct expenditure (in crores)	17.68	29.71	62.06

(Source : Adapted from "India in 1965," p. 72.)

The figures disclose a substantial growth of higher education in India. Thus, during the twelve-year period, there has been a substantial increase in the number of higher institutions of learning and research. Universities increased by 70 per cent, Arts and Science Colleges increased by 130 per cent, student enrolment by 141 per cent, and the number of teachers by 174 per cent, during the years 1950-51 to 1961-62.

Behind this expansion of higher education stands the growing desire of students coming out of schools to pursue higher education.



According to the statistical reports published by the Education Commission there has been a veritable explosion of enrolment in higher education during the fifteen years 1950-51 to 1965-66.* For example, enrolments at the under-graduate stage in Arts, Commerce and Science increased from 191,000 in 1950-51 to 759,000 in 1965-66, or at an average annual rate of 9.6 per cent. In post-graduate courses (Arts, Science and Research) the total enrolment increased from 18,000 in 1950-51 to 86,000 in 1965-66, an annual growth rate of 11 per cent. In professional education enrolments increased from 54,000 in 1950-51 to 249,000 in 1965-66—an annual growth rate of 10.7 per cent. It is possible to exaggerate the significance of these figures. In absolute numbers, the increase in the figures of enrolment is quite impressive. But as a percentage of the population within the age-group 18-23, the achievement still falls far short of the standards reached in other countries. In 1950-51, 0.7 per cent of this age-group were receiving higher education. In 1964-65, it increased to 2.1 per cent. The proportion of girls, receiving higher education is still extremely low. In 1965-66, they were 0.8 per cent of the age group concerned. In absolute numbers, the total number of girls receiving higher education (under-graduate, post-graduate and professional) was barely 200,000 in all India compared to 895,000 boys in 1965-66.

Has this expansion or explosion of enrolment in higher education been reflected in an improvement in quality? We have said enough to raise doubts. One useful criterion is the average cost of education. Are we spending enough on our students? The average cost per pupil in 1950-51 and 1965-66 on under-graduate (Arts and Commerce) education was Rs. 231 and Rs. 971 respectively, while those on under-graduate (Science and Vocational) education was Rs. 779 and Rs. 1,167 respectively. In post-graduate education (Arts and Commerce) the Education Commission estimates the likely costs per pupil in 1975-76 and 1985-86 to be Rs. 3,000 and Rs. 3,600 respectively, with a not inconsiderable increase of 20 per cent during these ten years. Another table in the Commission's Report shows that expenditure on post-graduate education reveals wide variations

* Education Commission Report, Education 1964-66, Table 12.1.

from university to university so that any averaging would be unrealistic. In any event, it would be safe to assume that the cost per pupil in India is still on the low side. This is true not only of higher education but of education in general. In 1965-66 we were spending Rs. 30 per pupil in lower primary, Rs. 45 in higher primary, Rs. 107 in lower secondary (General) stages of education. In other words, all-round educational improvement in a country like India is a huge problem of costs. An idea of the size of the problem can be obtained from the estimates which the Education Commission has made of expenditure likely in 1975 and 1985 respectively. Thus, in respect of school education, the projected expenditure in 1975-76 is calculated at Rs. 1,126 crores and that in 1985-86 Rs. 2,659 crores. These figures include expenditure on both recurring and capital accounts. By Indian standards the Commission's proposals would involve a huge investment in school education. If, to this, we add the projections in regard to higher education we should have to add to the figures relating to the school education, a sum of Rs. 4,22 crores for 1975-76 and Rs. 1,337 crores for 1985-86. The total projected educational expenditure (for all India) would thus come upto Rs. 1,548 crores in 1975-76 and Rs. 3,995 crores in 1985-86. These estimates represent the money costs for the improvement of education in all its stages. It is for the people who will have to foot the bill to decide how far they will be able to bear the additional burden of these improvements.

The question, as here posed, is two-fold. On the one hand, we have to face the problem of what I have described as explosion of enrolment while, on the other, the question of the staggering costs involved in effecting improvements is to be considered. When, due to our Constitutional obligation, we have to introduce universal education for the age-group 6-14, the total enrolment figures at the subsequent stages might very well prove beyond the taxable capacity of the people to finance unless a very rapid rate of growth of our economy can be secured. By 1975-86, the Education Commission expects that there will be facilities for higher primary education for 90 per cent of the relevant age-group. The Commission also expects that the enrolment for classes VIII-X will increase by 300 per cent during the twenty years 1965-66 to 1985-86 while enrolment in classes XI and XII will increase by 400 per cent (five times) during the same period.

In higher education the projected enrolment is 41.60 lakhs in 1985-86 compared to 10.94 lakhs in 1965-66. These figures, between them, present a situation in prospect which is as complex in its scale as disturbing in its consequences. The question whether this kind of expansion is to be regarded as too rapid for the nation's academic health or whether we should hasten slowly and attempt to consolidate our gains by improvement in depth rather than in extensity by determining a more managable area of operation should have to be decided on the high level of policy rather than that we should proceed to take any immediate steps in an adventure which might land us in a mess.

In this connection, reference may be made to what has come to be known as the Robbins Report on Higher Education (1961-63).¹⁰ The publication of the Report was acclaimed in England as "the most important social document to be produced since the Beveridge Report". The Robbins Committee was faced with the prospect of an estimated 560,000 students coming up for enrolment in universities in 1980-81 as compared with 260,000 at the time of the Report. To accommodate this large number of prospective students the Committee recommended that in order to forestall the demand for higher education running too far ahead of the supply of provision for it, 28 new universities should be established in addition to the 32 already existing. This proposal raised mixed reactions in Britain itself. Doubts were expressed whether "the change of scale, the influx of students of questionable bent, the thinner spread of first rate teachers" would affect adversely the nature and quality of British universities.¹¹ Professor A. K. Dasgupta commenting on this Report regards this fear as "genuine" and, in an interesting monograph on the subject, has examined the implications of the Robbins Report in the light of Indian conditions. He puts the problem like this: "We adopted the British system of education more than a century ago and we have got accustomed to it. Now we may very well be tempted to

¹⁰ *Higher Education : Report of the Committee appointed by the Prime Minister under the Chairmanship of Lord Robbins.*

¹¹ Editorial on the Robbins Report in *The Times* dated October 24, 1963, quoted by Professor A. K. Dasgupta in his monograph on "Reflections on Higher Education in India in the Light of the Robbins Report," *Minerva*, Winter issue, 1964.

follow the British model of growth. For is not our *per capita* expenditure on higher education still too low as compared with other countries, and is not the rush of students for admission in our universities too much for the existing institutions to bear?" It is Professor Dasgupta's thesis that expansion in the field of University education "has been a little too rapid, leading to a visible depression in the standard of teaching and research." In such a situation demand for places (in Colleges and Universities) should not be the only reason for starting more Colleges and Universities. It must, however, be readily admitted, as the Professor suggests, that there should be a qualitative assessment of the demand for places as well as of the response to this demand. The Robbins report speaks of "the undoubted gain to young people of being brought into contact with leaders of thought and of knowing themselves to be members of an institution in which the highest standards of intellectual excellence are honoured."¹² The standards of our Universities, as they are, are low enough; so is the average quality of those seeking places in institutions of higher learning. Would it be right to further dilute the quality of our students by opening many more sub-standard institutions with resources as well as qualified teaching personnel more "thinly spread?" It must be emphasised that a good teacher can give of his best only when he comes face to face with good students and has access to adequate teaching equipment and material. One may even go further and state that a good student often sets the pace of a good teacher (even as he may expose a bad or indifferent teacher). As under the existing circumstances, good teachers as well as of good students are not available on tap and as resources are scarce in a developing country, there is a case for "decelerating" the growth of universities and for improving the quality, instead, of the existing institutions. The best use of the existing institutions, Dasgupta says, is possible if there is, at the same time, a decentralisation in the teaching of specialities.

This last point is being already attended to by opening a number of "advanced centres" of study and research in selected subjects

¹² Robbins Report, p. 151.



at the different Universities of India with financial assistance from the University Grants Commission. While this initiative is to be welcomed, it would be agreed that what is required is to tone up the Universities in general. This result can be achieved even within our existing resources provided only that we do not create artificial barriers in the way of the free mobility of talent from one part of the country to another, so that University education can be a life-giving flow and not a stagnant cesspool of corruption, nepotism, casteism and parochialism. Most of the Universities confine their patronage to local talent or local products even when candidates of superior qualifications but belonging to other parts of the country are available. The latter also hesitate to accept assignment far from their own home areas. The shift to regional languages as medium of instruction and examination in undergraduate and post-graduate education will further prevent the free flow of talent, for every State would ultimately become a closed linguistic circuit. Whatever may be the ultimate effects of the change, this shift in its immediate consequences will result in the further deterioration of colleges and universities for there would be demand for many more colleges and universities in the near future making a call on the very limited resources that a State can provide. The case is thus very strong indeed for not insisting on ousting English as the medium of instruction in University education, not at least for, say, the next twenty years when at last we may, if everything goes well, expect a break.

The importance of a "link" language may be referred to in this connection. Unbiased academic opinion generally endorses the suggestion that nothing should be done at present to detract from the present position of English as the link language among the intelligentsia of India, and again among the intelligentsia of India and of the world. It would be placing the cart before the horse if we embarked on a policy of rapid expansion of education without making sure of the availability of competent teachers and other resources for good and efficient teaching. We cannot, on the other hand, escape from the fact that having provided for free and compulsory education for a certain age-group we cannot stop its further flow by erecting academic barricades. So far as subjects in the Humanities group are concerned, it is possible that fears about an overall shortage are somewhat exaggerated. Provided the Universities



function as true Universities and open their doors to talent and scholarship irrespective of regional considerations, and provided that students belonging to a particular region are allowed to rub shoulders with, to compete with, students coming from other regions, with English as the link language, an improvement of standards in the teaching of Humanities can be encompassed within a relatively short time. The situation is somewhat different with regard to Science teaching. Here there may be scope for decentralisation at least of Honours teaching. The other alternative is to *centralise* all Honours teaching in a central institution, which, therefore, would be in a position to command the best teaching talents. Such a proposal was, in fact, made a few years ago by Dr. J. C. Ghosh, then Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University, but it was reported to have failed due to the opposition of certain colleges.

So far as post-graduate teaching is concerned, the idea that each University should concentrate on certain specific fields of specialisation including research should be examined for there is a real dearth of good teachers of science subjects at the post-graduate level. While these efforts should continue to be made, the explosion of student enrolment and its implications cannot be ignored. More schools, more colleges, even more universities, will have to be provided to meet a very legitimate demand. It is certainly desirable, and should, to some extent, be possible, to persuade a large number of students to go in for technical, vocational or professional courses ; particularly if such courses are followed by immediate prospects of employment on good pay. A part of the rest will possibly fail to satisfy the minimum requirements of admission to a University. For those who remain, it should be possible for the nation to provide the best education that it can afford by stretching its resources to the maximum. This might mean that some of the better-equipped colleges might be allowed extended facilities, with suitable financial assistance where necessary, for post-graduate teaching and research. This would provide a powerful stimulant to other colleges also for the improvement of standards.



VIII

University Autonomy

This is a concept which is cherished by all University people, from the Vice-Chancellor down to the juniormost lecturer. Asutosh Mookerjee claimed "Freedom First, Freedom Second, Freedom Always," for his *Alma Mater*. Those brave words still raise an echo in the minds of all educationists and sustain them in their opposition against every form of unhealthy influence that may seek to curb the autonomy of a University. These undesirable influences may have their source in the political bossism of the party in power or in the bureaucratic craze for the extension of its authority.

And yet, what exactly does this concept mean? Does it mean that the universities are immune from any kind of control and supervision, that for some special, undefined reasons, the authority of the university is infallible and inviolate? Does it mean that even if a university commits blunders or otherwise is guilty of mismanaging its affairs or of lapses still more serious, there should be no one to call it to account?

It is needless to add that, put in this form, the demand for University autonomy in the absolute sense is untenable. No individual or body is permitted to claim absolute freedom. The University as a public body cannot claim a position above public interest. On the other hand, it is in the position of a Trustee in fiduciary charge of the interests of higher education in the country. It must, therefore, seek justification for its acts in terms of the interests of its beneficiaries. It cannot, as such, get rid of the question-mark that must necessarily be implicit in its policies and activities. At the same time, for precisely the same reason, it is in a privileged position. It must have the power and the freedom to discharge the obligations of its trust. It is, however, open to us to examine the nature of this privilege and of the attack to which it is, or may be, exposed in the course of its work.

There is no doubt about the basic soundness of the principle of university autonomy. This is a principle which is zealously guarded by the leading universities of the world. On the other hand, there are State universities or universities heavily subsidised by

the State. Such are the American land-grant Colleges or Universities. The Tokyo Imperial University is a State University. By and large, universities to whichever category they may belong, are very much sensitive to any form of interference with their academic work. There are other universities which are more or less independent of the government and enjoy what in practice amounts to complete autonomy. It is in fact these universities which have set the tone of modern thinking about the whole concept of university autonomy.

The Education Commission distinguishes between university autonomy and the academic freedom of university and college teachers. The teacher, the Commission argues, should be free to hold and express his views, however radical, within the class-room (and outside) provided he is careful to present the different aspects of a problem without confusing teaching with 'propaganda' in favour of his own particular views. As the Commission says :

"A teacher should be free to pursue and publish his studies and research ; and speak and write about and participate in debates on significant national and international issues. He should receive all facilities and encouragement in his work, teaching and research, even when his views and approach be in opposition to those of his seniors and the head of his department or faculty."

"In theory there is no serious restriction or curtailment of academic freedom, but we would like to see teachers practising more of it and vigorously. In fact, it is an inherent obligation of the academic community to play an active and positive role in critical examination, evaluation and evolution of concepts and policies over the entire spectrum of the society's concern and involvement. The universities have a major responsibility towards the promotion and development of an *intellectual climate* in the country which is conducive to the pursuit of scholarship and excellence, and which encourages criticism, ruthless and unsparing but informal and constructive. All this demands that teachers exercise their academic freedom in good measure, enthusiastically and wisely." (*Report*, p. 326)

No doubt the Commission has shown considerable boldness in making these observations. The snag is that though the *principle* of academic freedom in the sense explained above is likely to gladden the hearts of the non-conformist group (of teachers), it is, *in practice* rather difficult to draw the line between the extreme forms of academic freedom and non-academic licence, between supporting an arguable point of view with intellectual discrimination and whatever may be called partisan propaganda stuff. In India, we have teacher-politicians who



would willingly yield to the temptation of using the academic platform for spreading propagandist views, even to the point of actively participating in disruptive political agitation or encouraging their students to come out of their classes and take to the path of such agitation. Whether such activities should form an integral part of the 'intellectual climate' of a University is, to say the least, open to question ; that they frequently introduce an element of confusion in academic work, in the pursuit of intellectual interests is undeniable. It would, one may hope, not be considered reactionary if the suggestion is made that the academic freedom of teachers would not be adversely affected if the borderline cases, or cases that definitely involve the coercion of reason, be referred to the judgment of the faculty as a whole.

Apart from the academic freedom of teachers, there is also the need for securing to the University complete freedom in the selection of students, in the appointment and promotion of teachers, in determining the courses of study, methods of teaching and in the selection of areas and problems of research. Those are the fields which, in the view of the Education Commission, should constitute the exclusive province of a University. It is this freedom that constitutes University autonomy as distinct from the academic freedom of the faculty members. "It is important to recognise", the Education Commission writes, "that the case for autonomy of universities rests on the fundamental consideration that, without it, universities cannot discharge effectively their principal functions teaching, research and service to the community". It is to be noticed, however, that the functions of a University, under a democratic system, have to be linked to social needs or to the objectives of national development. It will, for instance, do the idea of University autonomy no good if it results in a glaring imbalance between the manpower needs of a country and the output of graduates. The output of skill may outstrip the demand or may fall short of it. In either case, there is need for some machinery, as much as academic leadership, to establish a proper relation between the two. If the educational system works in a way that it merely accentuates the problem of unemployment, there is a case for testing the validity of the system ; and the Government has an obvious responsibility. Similarly, the attempt by a University to open out its activities in the shape of opening new departments indiscriminately or without proper planning



may prove to be a costly futility in view of the paucity of suitably qualified teaching personnel or non-availability of necessary equipment ; in such cases some co-ordination between Universities in the selection of specialised fields of study or research undertaken by them may result in better utilisation of scarce resources without damaging the cause of University autonomy.

Much more insidious is the threat that is posed by the so-called democratisation of the University bodies. In dealing with this matter, it is difficult to avoid a contradictory position. A university is essentially an aristocracy—an aristocracy of intellect. It deals with a highly specialised field of human endeavour. To impose upon it the rule of the non-specialist drawn from the general public can mean one of two things : the non-specialist will either have to keep mum when highly specialised matters are being discussed and function as a wallflower, as a silent spectator of proceedings generally beyond his comprehension, or to make dangerous incursions into unfamiliar territory with extremely deleterious effects on University administration. Moreover, it is precisely through such persons, exposed to all kinds of influence, that University bodies become infected with the virus of partisan politics. As against this, it can be argued, and with considerable effect, that a modern university can hardly function from an ivory tower for it is now integrally related to the life of the community. It is the intellectual nursery of the young generation, a powerful force for moulding its character, and as such, an organisation in which the citizens have a clear interest. Through the acceptance of the principle that the citizens should be represented in the University bodies by people enjoying their confidence, a healthy channel of communication is established between the university and the people to the mutual advantage of both. Much of the ill-informed criticism that is often directed against the universities, even by well-meaning critics, is due to the absence of any link or direct inter-communication between the university authorities and their irresponsible critics. The association of the critics, or potential critics, with the highest university bodies will make the former share the responsibility of their office with distinguished teachers and scholars and that would provide the opportunity for a better understanding of each other's position. It would be unfair to assume that all those who come to the university through



a wider franchise would be so many subversive elements out to sabotage the university. On the other hand, it might be presumed that, with very few exceptions, they would also be educated men and women, alumni of universities, but now working with distinction in non-academic lines. Finally, the assumption that there is a built-in hostility between academic and (so-called) non-academic men is also not generally correct.

These contradictory lines of thinking can be solved, if at all, by evolving a *modus vivendi*. The adverse attitude of University dons is probably dictated by their experience of the electoral processes. These frequently lead to the evils of groupism. The answer to this would be to define the franchise in such a way that people of dubious antecedents might not turn up in the University Senates. No voter in a university constituency should be less than a graduate. It would be preferable if every University had a recognised "alumnus association" with the right to elect representatives to the Senate and other academic bodies of the University. It should be the lookout of the association to ensure that no undesirable political infiltration takes place *via* the association. What is contemplated is not a loose body like the Registered Graduates' Constituency of the Calcutta University but a well-organised body of alumni who would be subject to the discipline of that association and answerable to it for their performance in the Senate or other bodies to which they may be elected.

A different kind of potentially undesirable influence is that of the Government which has the power to nominate or appoint. For example, the Senate of the Calcutta University has many *ex-officio* members who are Government appointees. The Governor of the State is the *ex-officio* Chancellor. The Vice-Chancellor and the two Pro-Vice-Chancellors are to be appointed by the Chancellor in consultation with the Education Minister. There are also, under the Act of 1966, as many as 20 members to be nominated by the Chancellor to secure special representation of interests not otherwise provided for, including "persons who have rendered eminent service to the cause of education". Properly exercised, this kind of representation by nomination should help to bring in experts who would not care to line up at the hustings but whose services would be useful to the University. On the other hand, they might act as *benamards*



of the Ministerial Party in the Senate along with the *ex-officio* members. This together with the direct powers of the Government regarding approval, confirmation, sanction of grants etc., might make the Government's voice decisive in its bid to control the Universities.

One way to solve the conundrum is for the Government to pass a self-denying ordinance and play a nominal role in the exercise of its statutory powers much in the same way as the British monarch does. Another way is to make the Vice-Chancellor, the Syndicate (or the Executive Council), the Senate (or the University Court) and the Academic Council the final authority within their respective jurisdictions. In any case, all appointments, from that of the Vice-Chancellor down to the meanest official should be made by the appropriate authorities of the University to be confirmed by the Chancellor (not the Education Minister) as a matter of course though he might be given the power of veto in exceptional circumstances. There is no reason also why the post of the Chancellor should be tied up with that of the Governor, particularly if the Chancellor has to act merely as the proxy for the Education Minister.

These may very well turn out to be pious wishes. No Minister would willingly part with power and patronage. One should not, perhaps, mind provided the Government placed academic interests above everything else in the knowledge and belief that that is the best way to serve the national interests. We would rather say that if the University finds, as it should, an ally in the Government, a fellow-traveller, State help would be an asset and not a burden. Trouble arises if the help is accompanied with non-academic strings and, as stated, few elected governments would feel the urge to resist the temptation to use power for its own party interests.

To check such a possible misuse of power by the Government it has been further suggested that all Government grants meant for Universities at the State level should be determined by and routed through an independent body or Committee to be established at the State level. Apart from the fact that it should be a useful device to check the intrusion of politics, of discrimination and of the practice of log-rolling, the proposal, if accepted, would cut down a lot of red-tapism and lead to more efficient, impartial and quicker disbursement of grants. The present procedural delays add merely to the exasperation of the existing situation and hampers University work. In fact,



it is part of the concept of University autonomy, that grants to the University should be determined on academic considerations alone, of which the University should remain the final judge, the quantum of the assistance being of course fixed in terms of the available resources. It is, however, to be remembered that a University is not a revenue-earning device ; and as education is an ever-expanding dynamic process, it places on the Government the duty to allocate an increasing proportion of its revenues for the progress, quantitative as well as qualitative, of education, including higher education. There could be no greater self-defeating policy than to starve a university of funds necessary for its development. Needless to add, it should be the contingent duty of the Government to see that the funds are well-spent, and to insist that the quality of the performance of the University remains at a high and competitive level.



CHAPTER XVI

GENERAL EDUCATION

I

The Concept and its Justification

The term "General Education" is currently used to denote a concept of education that is at once general and special. It is not based on any well-defined self-sufficient syllabus of study, distinct from that followed in other disciplines and exclusive to itself. It rather indicates a *general* approach to knowledge. If at all it can be defined in a single phrase, it can be regarded as *integrated learning*. In other words, its aim is to correct the evils of over-specialisation or to make education a more balanced effort ; it seeks to impart knowledge that an "educated" man should be normally expected to possess to develop a wider outlook on life. It is, therefore, not confined to a single subject or specialisation. It is, in other words, a sort of basic knowledge, well integrated, seeking to provide a general background of learning which by increasing the area of a student's acquaintance with different subjects may make it easier for him to determine his own field of specialisation more meaningfully than he can do it now.

General Education, so far as it implies an area of study determined by a well-defined purpose, is a technical phrase. A man may be a physicist or an economist ; and he may be completely ignorant of such major fields of knowledge as history or philosophy or political science. Or, more broadly speaking, he may be a student of the Humanities without knowing a thing about the natural or biological or even the social sciences. Or he may be a scientist without any concern with literature or language or the broad streams of humanistic culture. To the extent that General Education, in its technical sense, does not figure in the normal curricular set-up of collegiate or university education, and is not treated as falling within the recognised streams of courses prescribed for examination for the first Degree, it may be regarded as a



special area of study which, while not wholly distinct from any of the prescribed disciplines, is yet not quite covered by any single one of them. In other words, it covers a broad area which seeks to impart a certain basic knowledge pertaining to all the major fields of interest so as to form an integrated, systematised, knowledge that will be based upon the inter-disciplinary character of modern education. Its over-all aim is to develop the integrated personality of man. Such a man would be a man of varied interests, of broad sympathies, of liberal views, an intelligent companion, a social asset, fully adjusted to his environment. Such a man would be the ideal product of a successful scheme of general education, carefully formulated, generously endowed and intelligently pursued.

It is to be freely conceded that the above is more a description than a definition, more an estimate of what it sets out to do than an enunciation of its course contents. In fact, a precise definition of what General Education means is not immediately available because it is still more or less in an exploratory stage with varying results. With the general description given above, a few negatives may, however, be added by way of further clarification. One of these has already been noted, namely, that it is not to be identified with any of the existing subjects.¹ A second negative is that it should not be confused with the "General Knowledge" course prescribed for some of the public examinations. The course in General Education is far from being a "Reference Annual", a package of information, or a directory of men and events, which have got to be committed to memory. Thirdly, it is not to be regarded as a subject by itself, with a distinctive field, though it can certainly be regarded as a composite, integrated course which can be fitted into the regular curriculum, with prescribed hours of study. Finally, it is not to be confused with the subject of "Education" which a teachers' training course provides or which is one of the subjects prescribed for the first Degree and post-graduate examinations.

¹ A near approach is the subject of "Social Studies" prescribed for the secondary education course. It is a sort of compendium of certain subjects. But it does not include the science subjects nor is it concerned with all the subjects commonly included in the "Humanities" group.

The snag, if any, lies in the word *general* in General Education; while "Education" is a special self-sufficient examination subject consisting of certain well-defined papers in which the students can specialise and which they can offer as a speciality for University examinations. General Education, *ex hypothesi*, is not intended to produce any specialists.

By way of summing up, we can hardly do better than refer to the following views on General Education expressed by an expert Committee of the University Grants Commission (1958-60), India :

General education concerns itself with a concept of education rather than with the content of courses ; it is a different method of teaching and to some extent of learning ; it is an approach to knowledge rather than the imparting of knowledge itself ; it emphasises the generic rather than the particular. It is a complementary, not a self-sufficient part of university education, meant to prepare the modern citizen. It emphasises the active more than the contemplative part which the student has to play in it.

Intellectually, general education should evoke curiosity and develop it into a searching interest : it should arouse questions that lead to knowledge, and only eventually to the forming of opinion ; it should sharpen reason for controlling emotions and where possible develop controlled emotion into creativity.

General education should lead the student to an awareness of himself and of the place which through his profession he will occupy in relation to his society. It should help him to acquire what may be called an "outlook on life" or a "philosophy of life".

General education should make students understand that learning is a continuous process which does not stop with the earning of a degree. It should also prepare students to develop a spirit of enquiry and intelligent formulation of doubts and quests and to acquire sufficient information about where to look for answers. It should instil in students a respect for facts, data and available sources as well as an awareness of problems of human existence which may not be solved through the ordinary process of reasoning.²

As there are still some honest doubts as to the justification of introducing a course in General Education in face of the modern tendency of giving a student, particularly in the higher stages of education, as many "options" as possible, according to his interests and aptitudes, instead of foisting on him a package course of unrelated subjects in some of which at least the student may feel no interest,

² Report on General Education, 1961, University Grants Commission, India, pp. 27-28.



or worse, towards which he may have a positively hostile attitude, it would be desirable to explore a satisfactory way to resolve such doubts. What is the use, the dissenters would ask, of letting the student know something of everything, to be a Jack of all trades but Master of none, that is to say, without specialising in any given field or fields when the modern demand is for an increasing number of specialists to deal with the complicated problems of modern life? Knowledge is expanding at such a rate, they say, that it is often difficult even for recognised specialists to keep up with the progress even in their respective fields. So why distract them with further burdens?

There is cogency in these arguments as far as they go. But the objections appear to stem from at least a partial misconception of the nature of General Education. Some of the observations made in the preceding paragraphs including the views of the University Grants Commission Committee may, perhaps, serve to over-rule the objections on the ground of the larger interests of education. Here it may be pointed out that General Education is not intended to oust specialisation. It would rather make specialisation more purposive and meaningful for it would place such specialisation within the larger perspective of its social context or purposes. At any rate, General Education is a course meant for the under-graduate when there is little scope for the extreme specialisation which the critics obviously have in mind. Further, the question of making General Knowledge compulsory even for the under-graduate course is still being debated. Honours students may, for instance, be given an option to take General Knowledge as one of the subsidiary subjects for the Honours Course. The main point at issue, from the point of view of specialisation, is the undesirable effects (from the larger educational standpoint) of over-specialisation, to the exclusion of all other interests in life. The views of the Radhakrishnan Commission (1948-49) to which reference has also been made by the University Grants Commission Committee on General Education will bear reproduction in this context:

Higher Education should not be looked upon as the acquiring of certain conventional accomplishments which mark one as a member of the educated class. It should be well-proportioned preparation for effective living in varied circumstances and relationships. The interests and opportunities and demands on life are not limited to any few subjects one may elect to study. They cover the entire



range of nature and society. That is the best liberal education which best enables one to live a full-life, usually including an experience of mastery in some specialised field.

On the subject of over-specialisation, the Commission (which included some eminent specialists among its members) observes :

The person with a narrowly specialised education is like a man who lives in a house with only one window, so that he can look out in only one direction. A general education should open windows in many directions, so that most of the varied experiences of his life, and most elements of his environment, shall have meaning and interest to him.

The Commission, finally, has rightly stressed the view that "the various elements of education should be pursued in vital relation to each other, so that for any person the result will be the best practical all-round development, together with effective training in his own field of work". Thus General Education takes a comprehensive inter-disciplinary view of modern education and does not stand in the way of specialisation.

II

Objectives and Purposes

General Education has been described as an "ally of good education". It should be thought of, as the University Grants Commission Committee put it, "in terms of appropriate educational experiences and development of rational skills and outlook rather than in terms of courses, prescriptions and examinations". Courses may, no doubt, be prescribed ; what matters ultimately, the Committee explains further, is "how the prescribed courses are to be taught and by whom". The basic idea behind General Education is the inter-dependence or unity of knowledge and the equal importance of the three broad areas of Humanities, Natural Sciences and Social Sciences for the training of the mind. Its purpose is, as already stated, to offer a counter-balancing factor against the present tendency towards narrow specialisation, to prevent "in-



tellectual isolation or estrangement among disciplines". The U.G.C. Committee expects General Education "to create a milieu in which the speciality can develop its fullest possibilities, and to create that balance and background which can improve the specialist's pursuit of creative activity". The Committee's attitude towards General Education *vis-à-vis* specialisation is placed beyond doubt by its observation that "General Education would not be worth having if it undermined in any way specialisation of a high order".³

It is the general idea to introduce General Education at the under-graduate stage. The Standing Advisory Committee of the University Grants Commission on General Education after referring to the views of the U.G.C. Standing Committee on "Standards in Higher Education" points out that the purpose of General Education is to meet some of the inhibiting limitations of the present system of under-graduate education and "break new ground in educational techniques". One of the limitations to which the U.G.C. Committee on General Education refers is the illogicality of the grouping of certain subjects in a particular way, at the undergraduate stage.⁴ It would have been better if the incongruity of any particular combination or combinations had been pointed out. The author's experience is that the limitations mainly derive from the exigencies of the College time-table and the particular combinations generally favoured by the students. In other cases, it is due to the limitation of resources whereby under-graduate colleges are obliged to restrict the number of courses offered. Non-availability of competent teachers in particular areas such as linguistics is another factor. In some of the science subjects, for instance Geology, though qualified personnel are available, they are promptly whisked away to more profitable employment on terms much more attractive than available

³ Report on General Education (University Grants Commission), New Delhi (1958-61), p. 16.

⁴ The Education Commission (1964-66) has also expressed the view in favour of a less rigid approach towards the permissible combination of subjects for the first Degree course. "The subjects" it says, "which, in the past, seemed to be far apart, are now seen to be much closer and at the higher stages many of the traditional frontiers are breaking down. Therefore, combinations like mathematics and economics or philosophy, physics or chemistry with biology, education or any other subject, should be permissible". —Report, p. 318.

for undergraduate teaching. However, it is good to know that the U.G.C. Committee does not propose to "graft" a course in General Education on the existing courses of under-graduate study. The Committee rightly says that this would add to the burden of the student who already has a heavy curricular load. It proposes instead that the General Education course should be "so integrated with the existing course that the former does not stand apart as a separate distinction". What exactly it means in concrete terms is not clear. Presumably it seeks to present before our students, pursuing a loose-knit combination of courses in a rather half-hearted and dispirited manner, a synoptic view of the intellectual achievements of the times, of the progress of human culture at the broad fronts of Humanities, Natural and Biological Sciences, and Social Sciences—to provide, again in the words of the U.G.C. Committee, "an appropriate curriculum-experience to a heterogeneous mass of young men and women who have individual and group differences in ability, aptitude, socio-economic status and ambition"; and to draw attention, once again, to this synoptic view of the fundamental purpose of education as presented in the report of the Radhakrishnan Commission (1948) :

"The purpose of all education, it is admitted by thinkers of East and West, is to provide a coherent picture of the universe and an integrated way of life. We must obtain through it a sense of perspective, *Samanyaaya* of the different items of knowledge."

And then the same Commission proceeds to point out :

"Man cannot live by a mass of disconnected knowledge. He has a passion for an ordered intellectual vision of the connection of things. Life is one in all its varied manifestations but we must have knowledge of life as a whole. It cannot be a collection of distracting scraps but should be a harmony of patterns. The subjects we study must be taught as parts of a connected curriculum."

A course in General Education is obviously intended to fill up a present gap in our existing system of education.

III

The Programme

Before we proceed to an examination of the various programmes or course contents suggested for General Education as a subject

for under-graduate study, it is necessary to clear a confusion—even a misconception. Observations of competent authorities have been quoted in the previous sections which are likely to cause some uncertainty as to whether General Education is to be deemed a distinct and separate course along with the other courses or subjects taken up by a student in preparation for the first Degree examination, or it is to be considered simply as a technique of teaching on an interdisciplinary basis. The view of the U.G.C. Committee that General Education should not be thought of "in terms of courses, prescriptions and examination" merely add to these doubts. It also talks of the "error" of "grafting" a General Education course on the existing courses of study and would rather have us believe that it is intended to "serve as a principle of rational organization of undergraduate education". That General Education is concerned with a concept of education rather than with the content of courses is also the view of the Committee which has been quoted in an earlier part of this chapter.

An attempt can be made to resolve the confusion likely to be created by such views. There is no doubt that the whole concept of General Education is inspired by a major deficiency in our existing curricular programme for the first Degree course and by the desire to correct the tendency towards early specialisation. The Education (Kothari) Commission has also, in its own way, tried to do away with such specialisation at the early stages of education. In other words, the concept of General Education is indicative of a new approach to education. It reflects a new, a modern, outlook on the intellectual needs of undergraduate education. General Education attempts to equip the average student with a knowledge of the basic elements as well as achievements of human culture and civilization. The curricular content of such a subject, no doubt, requires clear definition. This, indeed, is a point at issue and the University Grants Commission is currently engaged in evaluating the views of different authorities, including the Universities, on this subject and, if possible, to arrive at a consensus, while keeping in view the main idea and purpose of General Education. Seeing that there are large differences among the Universities regarding the actual programme of studies it would be no doubt difficult to arrive at a uniform, universally acceptable solution of the problem. In

fact, the U.G.C. Committee itself did not favour standardisation of General Education courses and has recognised the importance of experimentation in this field. "Each University and College", it wrote, "will have to work out its own programme of General Education keeping in view its traditions and culture as well as its personnel and material resources".^b

When the Committee reported in 1960, only 15 out of 43 Universities in India were offering General Education courses in one form or another. These were Aligarh, Andhra, Banaras, Baroda, Jadavpur, Karnatak, Kerala, Mysore, Poona, Rajasthan, Saugor, S. N. D. T. Women's, Sri Venkateswara, Utkal and Visva-Bharati Universities. Other Universities have since followed suit viz., Annamalai, Roorkee, Rabindra Bharati, Udaipur, Gujrat, Jamia Millia Islamia, Punjab (with its Colleges now divided among Punjab and Haryana) and Gurukul Kangra. All these Universities have introduced General Education at the level of the B.A. and B.Sc. courses, though a few have done so at the level of the pre-University course also. What is to be noticed is that, apart from Rabindra Bharati and Visva-Bharati and also a number of Punjab Colleges, all the other Universities have introduced General Education as an additional and separate course with the requirement of compulsory attendance at the lectures. In some of the Universities, as in Jadavpur and Saugor, General Education is a "non-examination" subject, while, as in 1960, it was a subject for the final examination in as many as 12 Universities. The method of teaching is not based on lectures only. Seminars, tutorials, group discussions and "practicals" are also held to cover the course as well as to supplement the course materials. In the University of Karnatak, though General Education is not an examination subject, a candidate for the degree examination must attend at least 75 per cent. of the lectures before he can be eligible to sit for the University examination.^c In addition

^b *Ibid.* p. v.

^c It may be mentioned that the Standing Advisory Committee of the University Grants Commission on General Education has expressed a contrary view, namely, that it is not necessary to treat General Education as an examination subject.



to the Universities mentioned above, a number of other Universities and Colleges have received grants from the University Grants Commission for the introduction of a course in General Education. These include Nagpur, Delhi, Kashi Vidyapith, Lucknow, etc., their total number, according to the latest figures available, being more than 100 (Universities and Colleges). The total amount of grants paid out till the 30th November, 1966, amounted to Rs. 8,13,014 to these institutions with a balance of Rs. 1,42,035 still due to be paid.

The curricular content of General Education programmes is not uniform in all Universities. Naturally, a General Education course has to be related to the existing curricular offerings of the different Universities. For instance, in Andhra, General Education course includes a course in "Elements of Physical and Biological Sciences" for Arts students and "Planning and Economic Development, Indian History and Constitution" for Science students. For Honours students there is one common integrated course on "History and Philosophy of Science". The General Education course is compulsory for all students. Again in Madras (as the U.G.C. Committee informs us), students at the under-graduate level take two compulsory languages, a major and an ancillary subject and a course in General Education which is called minor. The purpose of the minor course is to introduce to those taking the Humanities as 'major' some knowledge of science, particularly relating to modern science, and to those taking the sciences some knowledge of the Humanities. A 'minor' requires only a pass—no grades—but it is obligatory for any student before he can earn his degree. In Mysore also, there are separate courses in General Education for Arts and Science students; Arts students are required to study General Science while Science students have to take a course in Social Science, the course (spread over 2 years in the Three-Year Degree Course) being compulsory in either case. Jadavpur also makes a differentiation between Arts and Science students. A majority of the Universities, however, have prescribed the same course for Arts and Science students. Details are available in the U.G.C. Report on General Education, 1960, in respect of a few Universities as to the course content of the General Education course. It would be interesting to refer to some of these as indicating a very wide diversity in curricular content :

(1) In the Jadavpur University, the General Education course which is taught in the first two years of the degree course consists of the following papers : General Education I ((Everyday Science) and General Education II consisting of (a) Social Science (*i.e.*, Economics, History and International Affairs) and (b) Humanities (*i.e.*, a composite course in literature and philosophy), (a) being meant for students who have not taken any of these as their Honours subjects and (b) for those who have taken up these subjects. These are meant for the Arts students. Science students need only take up Social Science in the 2nd year of the Three-Year Degree course.

(2) Let us now turn to the Visva-Bharati University. When the General Education course was first started in this University in 1957-58, it consisted of the following six papers, as an integral part of the Three-Year Degree course, each carrying 50 marks : (a) History of Science, (b) History of Philosophy (General and Social), (c) Economic and Political Thought, (d) History of Indian Civilization, (e) Special period of European literature (Classical) and (f) Special period of Indian Literature (Classical). This course has since been modified with the exception of History of Science which has been retained as a compulsory paper of 100 marks in the Degree course in Humanities. The General Education course is now taught as " History of Civilization, Science and Culture " as part of the Degree course, both Arts and Science. Instruction is given through a series of lectures on different topics such as changing patterns of culture, evolution of civilisation, the impact of science, main currents of economic and political thought, India's contributions to the world —all these being regarded as " different aspects of human endeavour to a better life ". Each topic is covered in four lectures, twice a week for 2 weeks. Rabindra Literature occupies the pride of place. The actual topics of the lectures may, however, vary within the general framework of the course.

(3) The Sri Venkateswara University, Tirupati, also follows the lecture scheme in conducting the course in General Education. The course covers the first two years of the Three-Year Degree course. Arts students take Physical Sciences and Biological Sciences (with 40 lecture hours and 10 discussion hours every year for each section). Science students take Humanities and Social Sciences with a similar spread and working hours. Discussion groups are confined to 30



students at a time. The courses are compulsory. There is no single University examination ; a student has to take a number of tests from time to time and the sum-total of his marks decides his grade.

Two of the Universities, both Central, which have come in for some criticism, are the Banaras Hindu University and the Aligarh Muslim University.

(4) The Banaras Hindu University introduced a General Education course for the pre-University classes in July, 1959, and for the Three-Year Degree course as well as for the integrated and professional courses in July, 1960. The course is compulsory and is as follows :

P.U.C.	Chemistry, Physics, Geology, Geography and Biology (32 lectures).
B.A./B.Sc./B.Com.—	
Part I . . .	India, Modern Ideas and Institutions, Political Structure and International Co-operation (36 lectures).
Part II . . .	Nature of the Physical World, Meaning and Purpose of Science, Scientific Method, the Macrocosm, Earth as the Home of Man, Science and Society (40 lectures).
Part III . . .	Appreciation of Art and Literature, Architecture and Introduction to Philosophy and Psychology (50 lectures).
Pre-Medical Course . . .	Same as in B.A./B.Sc. Part I
Integrated Course in Mining and Metallurgy, Engineering and Technology.	. . . Same as in B.A./B.Sc. Part I
B.Sc. Part I (Agriculture).	. . . Same as in B.A./B.Sc. Part I
Integrated Course Part II.	Structure of Universe, Solar System, Stars, Clusters and Nebula, Structure and Shape of Earth, Latitude, Longitude, Seasons, Atmosphere, Troposphere, Stratosphere, Ionosphere, the Exosphere, Modes of generation of power, Nuclear Transmutation, Use of Energy for the Betterment of Man, Rockets and Missiles, Natural Resources of Earth, etc.

(Lecturers on these topics used to be paid Rs. 10 per lecture.)

(5) The Aligarh Muslim University introduced General Education in 1957-58 as a compulsory subject in the pre-University class. In the following year it was extended to the Degree (under-graduate) classes, both Arts and Science. The pre-University course in General Science was subsequently discontinued. There is at present one written paper (50 marks) for B.A./B.Sc. Part I Examination which is a University examination and two written papers (50 marks) for Part II (University) Examination. "Multiple choice" and short-answer type questions have been combined with "Essay-type"

questions "in order to test both the breadth of information and the depth of understanding acquired by the students" (*U.G.C. Committee Report 1958-60*). Aligarh is fortunate in having an admittedly competent staff to guide the students and an excellent venue in an impressive complex of buildings known as the "Kennedy Centre" named after John F. Kennedy, late President of the United States of America. The syllabus, prescribed for the B.A./B.Sc./B.Com. Part I Examinations (1960) included :

Title : Modern Indian Society

A. The Indian Heritage :

- (i) Cultural synthesis in Ancient India—Pre-Vedic, Aryan and Buddhist influences.
- (ii) Cultural Synthesis during the medieval period.
- (iii) Impact of the West.
- (iv) Movement for National Freedom.

B. Political Problems :

- (i) The Concept and forms of democracy.
- (ii) Fundamentals of the Indian Constitution.

C. Problems of National Unity :

- (i) Secularism.
- (ii) Communalism, Casteism and Regionalism.
- (iii) Emotional Integration.

D. Economic Problems :

- (i) Socialism and Planning.
- (ii) Our needs and resources.
- (iii) The Five-Year Plans.

E. India and the World :

- (i) India and World Peace.
- (ii) India's cultural and economic relations with other countries.
- (iii) India and the U.N.O.

For the B.A./B.Sc./B.Com. Part II Examinations (1961), the syllabus (Humanities) was divided into three groups of subjects :

1. Place of Art and Literature in Life.

2. Appreciation of Literature :

- (a) Forms of literature.
- (b) Craft of literature.
- (c) Values of literature.

3. Art Appreciation : *Either, (a) Appreciation of Painting Or (b) Appreciation of Indian architecture.*

(6) The M. S. University of Baroda has also an ambitious programme covering the pre-University and the first two years of the Three-Year Degree course. So far as the latter course is con-



cerned, it consists of topics recommended by the General Education Committee and approved by the Syndicate. The programme is implemented by two groups of teachers, first, by lecturers including the Co-ordinator and his assistants who are whole-timers in the department and, second, by part-time teachers coming from other departments. The syllabus covers a fairly wide field :

I. Humanities

- A. Literature I ... (India : Hindi, Gujarati, Marathi)
- Literature II ... (Drama : Sanskrit and English ; Comparative Study of Theatre and Drama).
- B. Fine Arts ... (Development of Art Forms from the earliest times to present day : Music, Dance, Architecture, Sculpture, Painting and Drama ; appreciations).
- C. Philosophy ... (Reading from Bhagavad Gita ; readings from Modern Philosophy).

II. World History, including the following fields :

Pre-History ; Early Civilisations ; Middle Ages ; Renaissance, Science and Industrial Revolution ; Modern History (including Rise of New Asia and its role in the conflict between Communism and Democracy).

III. Social Sciences including a course on "Our Economic Problems", agricultural and industrial.

IV. Natural Sciences

- A. The Nature and Evolution of Life.
- B. The Nature of the Physical Universe.
- C. Man's Exploitation of the Natural Resources.
- D. Concluding Topics (including the Scientific Method, Science and Society, and Science and Literature).

Of these, Literature is assigned (during the two-year course) 70 periods ; Fine Arts, 8 ; Philosophy, 12 ; World History, 20 ; Social Sciences, 40, and Natural Sciences, 60. The time-table provides for four periods per week for the first two years of the course.

(7) I shall close this discussion with a brief reference to the Indian Institute of Technology (I.I.T.), Delhi, which in common with the other I.I.T.'s runs a Department of Humanities and Social Sciences. Though the courses offered by this Department are not called General Education Course, the objective is more or less similar. According to the Delhi Institute, these objectives are :

- (1) To acquaint students with the nature and problems of contemporary society and the forces which influence it.

- (2) To give students a knowledge of the basic social sciences and an appreciation of their contribution to and importance for the understanding of human behaviour : to provide, in this way the " foundation knowledge " for future courses necessary for professional competence.
- (3) To provide the opportunity for the further development of individual potential in disciplines other than science and technology.
- (4) To develop essential skill, and qualities common to all branches of learning.

Courses offered by the Department at present include Sociology, Economics, Psychology, Political Science and Principles of Visual Design. These take place before the final year and attempt an inter-disciplinary approach to the study of the various areas of human activity. The courses offered to the fifth-year students include, among others, Human Relations in Industry, Principles of Management together with a considerable number of electives allied to the major fields of interest. The method of teaching is a combination of lectures and tutorial work (on which there is a strong emphasis). Assignments given to the students are regarded as a basic part of the teaching method.

IV

Assessment

The picture given in the preceding paragraph of the multi-form approach to the problem of General Education as well as of the curricular content of the General Education courses offered by different Universities in India, is sufficient to indicate that a lot of confusion still exists as to what exactly it means and how it can be accommodated or adjusted to the curricular pattern of the existing University courses. For instance, against the attempt of all the Universities which have so far introduced General Education to treat it as a subject for examination with its own curricular content, we have to contend against the following conflicting views :

1. General Education is " a principle of rational organisation of under-graduate education ".¹

¹ Report on General Education (U.G.C.), 1961, p. v.

2. The "advocacy of General Education does not proceed from any 'theory' of education". It "is based on the consideration that in Indian Universities reform of under-graduate teaching is overdue", that "while the introduction of the three-year degree course has altered the structure of under-graduate education, very little appears to have been done so far to improve its curricular content".⁷

3. It is necessary "to avoid the error of 'grafting' general education courses on the existing courses of study and thus adding to the burden of the student". It is to be "integrated with the existing course so that the former do not stand apart as a separate distinction".

4. General Education is essentially a technique of teaching.⁸

5. As regards General Education courses, "it is perhaps not necessary to treat it as a part of the University examinations". It should be imparted through problem-oriented teaching and by informed methods, such as "reading-cum-discussion clubs", seminars/summer schools, extra-mural lectures (by staff members as well as guest speakers etc.).⁹

6. General Education concerns itself with a concept of education rather than with the concept of courses.

7. The persons with a narrowly specialised education looks out in only one direction.¹⁰

8. "Among the suggestions for improving higher education which we (members of the Indian Universities Commission 1948-49) have received during the course of our visits to universities, scarcely any has been more frequently or more vigorously presented than the need to escape from the extreme specialisation which now prevails."¹¹

9. "General Education would not be worth having if it undermined in any way specialisation of a higher order."¹²

⁷ Report on General Education (U.G.C.) 1961, p.v.

⁸ Views of the Standing Advisory Committee on General Education (U.G.C.).

⁹ The Indian Universities (Radhakrishnan) Commission, 1948-49, quoted in the U.G.C. Report on General Education (1961).

¹⁰ Report on General Education (U.G.C.), 1961, p. 16.



10. General Education should be made compulsory and should be common to all students at the Three-Year Degree course. It must run at least for 2 years of the Three-Year Degree course, at the end of which there should be an examination.¹¹

It is not necessary to multiply such contradictory extracts. The U.G.C. Committee has, perhaps, correctly hit the mark when it stressed that there is room for experimentation in this field. An attempt may, however, be made to sort out the basic ideas and to separate the ideal from the reality and also the theoretical or conceptual frame-work from the practical limitations of the academic situation.

In the first place, it may be assumed that there is a general desire for a more rational outlook on the purposes and significance of education in modern India and to assess the role of a well-integrated system of General Education as a corrective against the present imperfect and unbalanced programming of higher education up to the University stage in India, with a full awareness of the existing limitations. India also shares the anxiety of the intellectual world caused by the evils of over-specialisation, though here the evils are not so prominent or widespread as they are in some Western countries.

Secondly, it is widely realised that the present rigid separation of the arts and the science courses should be softened, if not removed, in order to make for a more balanced and integrated education. In this connection, the following view of the complementary nature of the arts and the science courses expressed by the General Board of the Cambridge University (1957) and as summarised by the U.G.C. Committee on General Education¹² may be specially commended :

"The Board did not wish to overstress the differences of mentality between the scientist and the "arts" man; they were aware that both kinds of study involved imagination as well as accuracy. But they had in mind one broad distinction: arts men are trained not only to collect accurate data and to use them systematically, but also to exercise critical judgments upon matters of opinion where scholars may reach quite different conclusions. On the other hand, the conclusions of the scientists are based on precise observations and measurements, involve exact

¹¹ Hyderabad Conference on General Education, 1957. This was attended, among others, by several American experts.

¹² Report on General Education (U.G.C.), 1961, pp. 60-61.



calculations and must be tested by experiments or controlled observations ; agreement on essential issues can therefore ultimately be reached. With this distinction in mind, the Board thought the time was opportune for a new scheme within the Cambridge Tripos system, designed to give the under-graduate both types of discipline and learning to appreciate the advantages and limitations of both."

Thirdly, as regards the question whether a course in General Education should be treated as an examination subject, the answer—obviously one in the affirmative—is almost pre-determined inasmuch as students are not likely to have much interest in a subject unless it is prescribed for a University (or Board) examination and also because most of the Universities, as shown in the arrangements made by them, have accepted the teaching as well as the presentation of the subject as an examination course.

Fourthly, if it is decided to introduce General Education as an examination subject—which would necessarily require compulsory attendance at lectures, seminars, discussion groups etc.—it would be necessary to formulate the main objectives of the course as well as of the examination following its completion. So far as the objectives are concerned, the formulations of the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi, may be considered as providing a good starting point for discussion.

Fifthly, having regard to the existing curricular load on our students in the Degree classes, the curriculum of General Education needs to be drawn up in an easily assimilable form suitable to Indian students without sacrificing the essential aims of General Education. Even the Cambridge Board had recommended that the science course in the proposed curriculum "should deal with a comparatively narrow branch of science in considerable depth, in such a way as to emphasise in particular the aims and methods of science." The possibility of following a similar method for the Arts subjects should be examined.

Sixthly, the extreme variety of the syllabi in General Education introduced in the various Universities, of which some examples have been given in the preceding section, as well as the observations made by the Study Teams of the University Grants Commission, Delhi, and the Hyderabad Conference (1957), need not cause any bewilderment but, on the contrary, as these were formulated by acknowledged experts, their views should help to prepare some

sort of a pilot plan, with the assistance of the University Grants Commission and other expert bodies. Such a plan would naturally be based upon an adequate recognition of India's particular needs and deficiencies.

Seventhly, while the Universities would still be free to draw up their own schemes in accordance with regional needs and requirements, some of the essential fields of study will no doubt continue to be dictated by national considerations. The proposed Pilot Plan, or a nationally formulated syllabus, drawn up in broad terms, may prescribe these essential fields, after consultation with the State Universities and other expert bodies. As an example, reference may be made to the syllabus under "Modern Indian Society" of the General Education course of the Aligarh Muslim University. This syllabus provides for the basic training in Indian citizenship irrespective of whatever course, Arts or Science or Commerce, the student might wish to take up.¹³

Some of the major difficulties likely to be experienced in any scheme of General Education, considered as a subject for University study and examinations, are detailed below :

- (i) in its very nature, General Education does not offer a clear-cut course and, therefore, does not enthuse a student who seeks to study a subject which can be properly identified ;
- (ii) the teachers also, in teaching such a composite course, are likely to be at a loss to determine the level at which they should select the course content or fix the standard of teaching the same ;
- (iii) specialists and senior teachers are not likely to be attracted towards teaching such a subject which is likely to be graded low among the traditional disciplines ;
- (iv) there is bound to be a certain amount of overlapping of teaching particularly over the inter-disciplinary areas ;
- (v) the problem of its assimilation to the curricular pattern of the Three-Year Degree course will continue to present some difficulty ; the risks are : duplication of lectures, waste of

¹³ See Section III for details.



academic time, an unconscious premium on, or tendency towards, superficiality of approach or over-generalisation ; and

(vi) it will have no specific job-value.

Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that some of the universities have reported a lack of interest in the subject among students followed by the evil of absenteeism. It is doubtful if a college will be strict to the point of refusing to allow a student who has done well in the other subjects at the college test examinations to sit for the university examination merely because of his indifferent performance in General Education. Unless the course is severely restricted—in which case it is not likely to fulfil the purpose for which it is designed—its large sweep is likely to be beyond the capacity of a large percentage of our second-divisioners, not to speak of the third-divisioners.¹⁴ Finally, if the course objectives are to be substantially fulfilled, it would require a large number of very competent teachers of whom there are not too many in our colleges. This defect may, perhaps, be remedied to some extent through an exchange of professors to do extra-mural teaching with inter-collegiate, even inter-university, co-operation.

Nor is the difficulty about the supply of course materials or even reading materials easy to solve. A General Education course, to be effective, will require a considerable expansion of library facilities and the creation of suitable reading materials. These materials will necessarily have to be very selective for, presumably, a student "should not be taught more than he can think about". It is not merely a problem of how much to teach but of what to teach. As the Radhakrishnan Commission has set forth : "The aim of General Education should be to select from the vast total of human knowledge elements which are most significant and representative, and to present them in such a way as to lead to an understanding of controlling principles and chief classes of phenomena with typical

¹⁴ A fair idea of the large sweep of the syllabus will be obtained from the fact that the syllabus suggested by the Hyderabad Conference in Natural Science alone, consisting of 26 separate items, would require 89 periods a week.

illustrations and cases." The University Grants Commission is, of course, ready to offer assistance up to a point for meeting the financial liabilities of a college or university introducing General Education. Such assistance, as at present conceived, will extend, "in a suitable manner," to meet the cost of conferences and seminars, additional teachers, translation of reading material needed for General Education courses, cost of printing such material (which may be later recovered if students pay for such material), mechanical equipment such as projector, tape-recorder, phonographs and material like slides, records, etc. needed for it, additions to the library and minimum office equipment—even the cost of additional rooms and a hall for discussion and general sessions. As already mentioned the University Grants Commission has distributed on these accounts over Rs. 8 lakhs (up to the November 30, 1966) out of a total sanctioned amount of Rs. 9,55,049, paid out of a Ford Foundation grant. The grants were allotted to 23 universities and 99 colleges. As the financial liability would ultimately devolve on the State Governments (in the case of the State universities and colleges), it is doubtful whether, in the event of the withdrawal of Central assistance, General Education would continue to enjoy the same encouragement and patronage in a more material form rather than in pious wishes and noble thoughts.

That there will always be doubters whenever a new or unusual scheme is recommended for acceptance is, of course, the usual experience. A new concept at least reveals an active mind which is always preferable to an anaemic attitude and a static "play-safe" policy even when it has ceased to yield results. It may be quite in order to agree (or not to agree) to a particular pattern or view of General Education. But the concept itself, as we have seen, is very powerfully supported. There is, of course, need for further clarification and thought. Some of the elements of confusion have also been indicated. It is, however, a point for serious consideration if all this adds upto a plea for the total rejection of the proposal. Maybe, it might be found more practical to give effect to the proposal in a different form. In Calcutta, for instance, a School of Humanistic and Cultural Studies functioned for some years under the auspices of the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture. The course was started in 1961-62. At first it dealt with the study of the life, thought and culture of the peoples of India and of the rest of the world to which was added



a course on "Emerging World Community" in 1962-63. In 1964-65 two more courses were added, namely, "Western Cultural Appreciation" and a short course in "Music Appreciation through Studies in the Musical Heritage of India and the West." A fourth course on "Indian Culture Appreciation" was added in 1965-66. In 1966-67, the courses were revised and as many as ten independent groups of studies were framed, which as the Prospectus of the School put it, was "designed to equip our students with the capacity to carry on higher studies in their special fields of interest." The method is that of lectures followed by discussion or questions and answers; a cyclostyled copy of the synopsis of the lecture is circulated beforehand, whenever possible, to the enrolled students. The lectures are delivered in the evenings, from 6-30 p.m. to 8-30 p.m. three days a week. The total number of lectures is 120 for Groups I-VII and 42 for Groups VIII-X. The lecturers, each an expert in his or her own field, used to be selected with great care. They themselves determined the scope of their lectures as suggested by the title of the course, and all worked without accepting any remuneration. Calcutta's cosmopolitan population provided a large fund of talent on which the Institute has gratefully drawn. The whole effort constituted Calcutta's nearest approach to a General Education course. An important omission, however, was the lack of science teaching. Still another lacuna was its isolation from University education or courses. Certificates were granted to all those who completed the full course but there was no end-of-the-course examination. There was no upper age-bar to admission, the lower age limit being 16.

Perhaps—in case it is not possible to introduce a course in General Education (for whatever reasons) in all our colleges and universities as a compulsory subject—it may be possible to introduce it, on an experimental basis, in a slightly different form and concentrate the teaching (to start with) in a few selected centres such as are easily accessible to the students. A few "major" universities or a few selected colleges in each State may be persuaded to make the attempt. In case it is considered desirable to introduce General Education as a full-fledged subject for university examination, it might be offered in the first instance as an optional subject, admission being restricted to students deemed qualified to receive and profit



by such education. If it is agreed to admit students to such a course on a selective basis, it would be expected to start its operation under fair weather. The financial commitments would still be a matter of some anxiety, but it need not be a too heavy burden. Excursions, field work, audio-visual arrangements, seminars and workshops—all essential parts of a scheme of General Education from the operational point of view—might be managed and efficiently conducted, with suitable grants from the U.G.C. and the State Government. It would, in any case, save the scheme from initial demoralisation due to an overload of students of inferior mental calibre.



CHAPTER XVII

TECHNICAL EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT-PATTERN AND MANPOWER NEEDS

I

Education, an Instrument for a Career

There appears to be some confusion about the concepts of technical and vocational education and their relation to general education. One view is that education is a general process of training the mind and the senses and it is not scientific to compartmentalise education into general and technical. It is stated that a programme of secondary education "should rest upon all those interests which stir the lives of adolescents". Such education is certainly interested in fitting the adolescent for earning a living. This view would have us recognise that there is no well-demarcated line between this interest in earning a living and the other interests of adolescent youth. "His interest in health, in being popular, in mating, in facts about plant life, about animal life, and about the workings of men's minds ; these and other interests," it is argued, "integrated with those concerned with making a living, should be the basis of a unified course of study". It is this view which possibly lies behind the philosophy of giving a vocational and practical bias to basic as well as secondary education and to integrate technological and engineering training with courses in humanities. But there is a warning that "unless wisely managed, this attempt to operate an integrated school programme may mean merely to motivate general education through the students' interest in vocational subjects. Of course, that must be avoided. Vocational education must not be spoilt. Its fundamental purpose, which is to prepare the student for earning a living must not be thwarted. On the other hand, it must be clear that vocational teachers are interested in seeing that workers possess wide social interests. Therefore, in so far as it can legitimately be done,

vocational education, as well as industrial arts, may properly help to motivate an all round general education." It is now accepted that education for a specific vocation is an integral function in the adjustment of the individual in society. Vocational education must be regulated by vocational guidance of which placement and advancement in jobs are necessary complements. Educational counselling and placement services now-a-days form an important part of the educational programmes of modern Universities.

Vocational education has been broadly defined to include all those experiences whereby one learns to carry on a gainful occupation. It is pointed out that in a sense all education, as stated above, has a vocational motivation although when we speak of vocational education as such, we refer to a system of training based upon manipulative skill and directly related to the vocational interest of an individual. On the other hand, there may be instruction which is general or non-occupational in its purpose. A school course for instance, may have a practical bias without being narrowly vocational and sacrificing its broader educational objectives.

In a similar manner, technical education is imparted in any school system if training is provided in the use and manipulation of tools and practical instruments with the intention of providing an experience which can be applied in later life. As Schairar says, when this practical experience takes up a large proportion of school life, the borderline of school subject handicraft to technical education has been crossed. Manual and craft education by itself is not technical education. Technical education and training postulates a degree of specialisation which makes it a system distinct from general education though not independent of it. In fact, a satisfactory technical education, like vocational education, must be based on an adequate general education. Too much specialisation at the school age may lead to occupational rigidities, not to speak of indifference to other aims and interests in life, a negation of the feeling that there is anything else in the world worth spending one's time on. Education requires that cultural ends should not be sacrificed to the claims of a vocation ; on the other hand, both should be viewed as complementary to each other. Particularly if the student is not content to become a mere technical hand or mechanic with practical training exclusively concerned with workshop practice but wishes to proceed



to higher technical or technological courses, he should have a fair background in theory such as forms part of general education. A good technical training would enable the individual to manage mills, factories and workshops, to work, repair, construct, adapt or improve ordinary machinery, to manage agricultural farms on scientific lines, to serve as an engineer, or set up a small workshop of his own or in association with others or for conducting remunerative chemical arts such as preparation of dyes, inks, varnishes, soap and cosmetics. This, of course, is not an exhaustive list but follows closely the list of objects that had once been outlined for a proposed chain of industrial schools including one at Calcutta, under a scheme submitted to the Government almost one hundred years ago—in 1876 to be exact—by one Dinanath Sen, Headmaster of a normal school in Bengal and a founder-superintendent of an industrial school. Modern developments would have substantially added to the list.

Apprenticeship training is another idea which is particularly suitable for training junior workers. It is an on-the-job training in which the student apprentices learn from the supervisory staff under whom they are placed. It is a variant of the hereditary system prevailing in India from a long time past and under which technical skill and know-how is handed down from father to son. One of the earliest examples of apprenticeship training in India (or was it *the* earliest?) was that provided by the old Evening School in Calcutta which gave part-time instruction to apprentices and others engaged in engineering works, which was in existence as long ago as in 1900, run by certain proprietors of workshops in Calcutta to give theoretical training to the apprentices who worked in the workshops. A regular organised system of apprenticeship training was suggested by the R. N. Mookerjee Committee (Chairman : Sir Rajendranath Mookerjee) in 1920. The scheme was based on "concurrent workshop experience and theoretical instruction". The Board of Apprenticeship Training (BOAT) subsequently came into existence to give effect to the principle laid down by the Committee that "Mechanical Engineering training could only be given effectively, combining sound practical training under commercial conditions with simultaneous theoretical training". Every year the BOAT holds an entrance examination which entitles the successful candidates holding its Certificate to an apprenticeship in firms recognised by the Board.

The training is provided in the Senior Technical Schools for four or five years. These schools also used to operate the War Technicians Training Scheme. On the other hand, students of the Senior Technical Schools could finish their Diploma or Associate Course at the Bengal Engineering College. The need for assisting in the development of technical education as it relates to industry has since been recognised afresh by passing the Apprenticeship Act in 1961 and the establishment of the Industrial Training Institutes (ITI) at the skilled worker level and the "polytechnics" at what may be called the technical level. The Apprenticeship Act controls some 1,834 establishments with more than 22,000 places.

One final point to notice is the view generally held by the ignorant (but in some cases even by those who ought to know better) that vocational or technical education is meant for the inferior type of students, that is, those who have been denied access to Colleges or Universities, or have had no means to proceed to higher education and must somehow begin to earn money as quickly as possible. This kind of mentality has long retarded the nation's progress towards prosperity. To-day, in free India, the value of technical education cannot be over-emphasised. In fact, the risk to-day is in the reverse direction. We find that in the case of engineering graduates, there has been an overproduction of engineers and for the first time in our country since independence, unemployment among such graduates has emerged as a serious problem. That is not all. In the modern craze for technical and technological education, the more fundamental values of life might be lost sight of. The pages that follow are not meant to carry the impression that technical education or education in science is the be-all and end-all of all education. It is necessary to plead for a sense of perspective; and also for an understanding of the close inter-relation between general education and technical education. All proposals for technical or vocational education should be studied in this context.



II

Early Beginnings

A brochure¹ prepared by the Eastern Regional Committee of the All-India Council for Technical Education and published under the auspices of the Ministry of Scientific Research and Cultural Affairs, Government of India, in 1963, gives an interesting, though brief, account of the development of technical education in India. According to this account, the earliest record of an established technical institution in India can be traced to 1794 when the first institute of its kind was established at Guindy, Madras. That was presumably a lone effort for it was half a century later, in 1846 to be exact, that the first Engineering College on modern lines was established at Roorkee in the United Provinces (now Uttar Pradesh). By 1900, the following Engineering Colleges and Technical Institutes were established, namely, those at Poona (1854), Bengal (Sibpur Engineering College, 1856), Patna and Dacca (1876), Victoria Jubilee Technical Institute at Bombay (1888) and Kala-Bhavan at Baroda (1890). Even by 1939, at the time of the outbreak of the first World War, India could boast of only 11 Engineering Colleges. It was the War which underlined the necessity of stepping up the output of technical personnel and the progress has been further accelerated since the attainment of independence in 1947. In 1963, India had, according to the information given in the brochure, 116 institutions for engineering and technological studies up to the Degree standard and 250 institutions at the lower level of the diploma standard.

A further fillip was given to this development by the establishment, in 1945, of the All-India Council of Technical Education on the recommendation of a Committee formed under the chairmanship of Naliniranjan Sarker. This Committee recommended the establishment of four regional Higher Technological Institutions which, between them, would provide for a total enrolment of 2,000 under-graduate and 1,000 post-graduate and

¹The Progress of Technical Education in India, 1963, with a foreword by Sir Jehangir J. Ghandy, Chairman, Eastern Regional Committee, All-India Council of Technical Education.

research students. It also recommended the upgrading and consolidation of 14 institutions established earlier. The higher technological institutions, known as Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT), were established at Kharagpur (1951) in Bengal, Bombay (1957), Madras (1957) and Kanpur (1960). These Institutes which provide training at the undergraduate as well as the post-graduate levels leading to the Master's degree in Engineering receive considerable technical assistance from foreign countries, notably, U.S.S.R., West Germany and U.S.A., as well as the U.N.E.S.C.O. So far as higher technical education is concerned, the progress of such education during the decade 1951-61 will be apparent from the following figures :—

TABLE
ENGINEERING & TECHNOLOGICAL INSTITUTIONS

	1951		1961	
	Degree	Diploma	Degree	Diploma
No. of Institutions	53	89	111	209
Sanctioned Intake	4,788	6,216	15,850	27,701
Outturn	2,693	2,626	7,026	10,349

Further progress in engineering and technological education was indicated by Mr. M. C. Chagla, then Education Minister in the Government of India, in his Convocation Address at the Birla Institute of Technology and Science on March 20, 1966. According to him, by 1966, there would be 130 engineering Colleges with an outturn of 12,000 graduate engineers a year and 290 polytechnics with an annual output of 15,000 diploma-holders. The target to be reached by 1971 was, as indicated by him, 28,000 graduate engineers a year and 60,000 diploma-holders. The figures are, no doubt, meant to impress but according to a recent press release (July 23, 1967), the annual report of the Ministry of Education, Government of India, for 1966-67 does not envisage any "substantial expansion" of engineering education during the 4th and 5th Five-Year Plan. In the opinion of the Ministry, the facilities for engineering education already created would be able to meet the demand for degree-holding technical personnel during the next 10 years. Actually, as already noticed, holders of engineering degrees in India are already facing the



spectre of unemployment : a curious phenomenon in the case of a developing economy.

A point for consideration has been the development of engineering and technical education on a regional basis. The All-India Council of Technical Education is assisted in its work by four Regional Committees representing the Central Government, State Governments (of the Regions concerned), educationists, industrialists and labour. The Eastern Region comprises the following States and Territories : West Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Assam, Manipur, Tripura, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, with Headquarters in Calcutta ; the Northern Region comprises Uttar Pradesh, Punjab (now Punjab and Haryana), Rajasthan, Delhi, Jammu and Kashmir, and Himachal Pradesh, with Headquarters in Kanpur ; the Western Region comprises Maharashtra, Gujrat and Madhya Pradesh, with Headquarters in Bombay ; and the Southern Region comprises Madras, Mysore, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Pondicherry and Laccadive Islands, with Headquarters in Madras. In response to regional needs, a number of Regional Engineering Colleges have been established under the joint management of the Central and State Governments. The Regional Colleges established during the second Five-Year Plan included those of Durgapur, Jamshedpur, Rourkela, Nagpur, Bhopal, Surat, Allahabad, Srinagar, Warrangal, Kozikoda, Delhi and Mangalore. The Third Plan contemplated the establishment of 23 more Engineering Colleges including 8 Regional Colleges, and 91 Polytechnics. Apart from these, Industrial Training Institutes for the training of technicians have been established with the following regional distribution, namely, Eastern Region—39, Northern Region—43, Western Region—30 and Southern Region—34. Maharashtra and Gujrat share between them the largest number of such institutes (22), followed by Uttar Pradesh and Bihar (15 each), Punjab (14 including 4 industrial training centres) and West Bengal and Madras (10 each). These Institutes are meant for the training of craftsmen. The duration of the training varies from 6 months to 18 months. There were, in 1963, about one lakh (100,000) of such persons receiving training. Apart from these, there are technical high schools as well as junior technical schools (numbering 103 with a total potential intake capacity of 18,000), artisan training centres, trade schools, both private and State, and similar establishments. There

are also opportunities for training on an "on-the-job" basis. In its organized form, it is controlled under the Apprentices Act in some 1834 establishments with more than 22,000 places. The king-pin of the whole system is the I.T.I. The Education Commission has recommended a substantial increase in the capacity of these Institutes. There is presumably a greater demand for middle-level workers with training at the diploma or certificate level than there is for professional degree holders.

Certain features of this relatively rapid development of engineering and technical education may be indicated. In the first place, due to the introduction of the 11-year Higher Secondary Course, the duration of engineering study at the degree level has been extended to a five-year integrated course after 11 years of schooling. That has meant an increase in the total strength of students in all technical institutions. While the Engineering Colleges established earlier had a very limited roll strength—with normal admission of 100-200 students annually—the subsequent tendency has been towards a larger enrolment, so as to effect a substantial reduction in the per capita cost of such education. The average annual enrolment in the Regional Colleges is now 250. Institutes established earlier have all increased their annual intake from 120 to 180 while some of the older institutions have got an admission capacity varying from 350 to 400. *Pari passu*, the average admission strength of the diploma institutions has also been raised. Secondly, apart from the increase in the number and enrolment of such institutions, the range of the courses offered has also shown a welcome tendency towards expansion. While before World War II, engineering institutions provided for training in the basic engineering branches only such as Civil, Electrical and Mechanical, the present policy is for the diversification of courses so as to meet the national needs in the different fields of engineering science and technology, such as metallurgy, tele-communication, automobile engineering, architecture, mining, fisheries, agricultural engineering, industrial engineering and naval (marine) engineering. Interest has also been aroused in glass and ceramics, printing technology (there are four such regional schools), textile technology, leather etc.² Thirdly, in addition to provision

² The number of such institutions, chiefly polytechnics, is, however, yet too few to make any appreciable impact on the situation.

for higher technological education, increasing attention is being paid to meet the demands for technical training at the junior level. Apart from the provision of a "technical stream" at the Higher Secondary stage, a number of junior technical schools and, at the diploma level, polytechnics, have been established to cater to the needs of students belonging to the age-group 14-17, corresponding to the last 3 years of the existing Higher Secondary Schools.³ The training at these junior schools is so designed that students passing out of these schools would be able to join the industries directly or start on their own and earn a living. It is, of course, advisable for all concerned to arrange for some practical training in industry before such education can be really effective. As the Kothari Commission observes : "Formal training, even at the highest level, must always be completed by a period of practical training and internship within the industry itself."⁴ Finally, there is the question of cost. This is, indeed, one of the great hurdles in the way of a large expansion of higher engineering and technological education in India. There is no uniformity in the scales of fees charged at the different centres. The brochure (1963) issued by the Eastern Regional Office of the Ministry of Scientific Research and Cultural Affairs, gives figures that show a startling range of variation. Thus, while the Bihar College of Engineering at Patna charges a tuition fee of Rs. 96/- per annum, the charges at the Birla Institute of Technology at Ranchi amount to Rs. 600/- per annum and at the Manipal Engineering College, Mysore, the charges are as high as Rs. 1,000/- per annum. In the institutions of the Eastern Region, the average fee charged is Rs. 200/- per annum while in the Western Region it is Rs. 300/- per annum. Private institutions usually charge higher fees than State institutions. Here apparently there is room for generous Government subvention to reduce the costs of such education so as to bring it within the reach of the average middle class Indian family desirous of educating the more promising of their boys. In addition, the State should make

³ The Education Commission (1964-66) has recommended that, by 1966, some 20 per cent of all enrolments at the lower secondary level and some 50 per cent beyond class X should be in part-time or full-time vocational courses.

⁴ Report, p. 370.

such education free for talented boys belonging to the poorer sections of the society. The huge manpower needs of the country demand a relaxation of the present rigidities afflicting technological education, first, by increasing the number of places and paying greater attention to the diversified courses and, secondly, by a liberal award of stipends, scholarships and other forms of assistance to our needy scholars. There is no doubt that such assistance would be a good and safe investment, one likely to yield rich dividends. The Education Commission refers to the Smith-Hughes Act of the United States of America under which direct subsidies are made from federal funds in support of vocational courses.

Besides the above, part-time and "sandwich" courses have also been instituted to fill up a lacuna in our technical educational system. As many as 19 centres have been selected for the introduction of part-time degree courses for diploma-holders against a target of 25 in the Third Plan. The Education Commission (1964-66) also has recognized the utility of part-time education for those to whom facilities for full-time education are not available. This is a general problem, not exclusive to the field of technical education. So far as students going in for general education are concerned, it is not, perhaps, so difficult to arrange evening classes or correspondence courses for them. Evening classes for general science students have also been organised in some of the institutions meant primarily for full-time day scholars. This has enabled more economical use of laboratories, class rooms and staff. Correspondence courses and "continuing education," have also opened out facilities for further education to those who are unable go join full-time courses. In the case of technical education, this is particularly useful as it is directly linked with the need for increasing the productivity of the nation. The Commission observes :

" Facilities for part-time, on-the-job and vocational and technical training for those who have entered employment or are seeking employment after leaving school below class X need also to be greatly expanded. These may be offered on a part-time, apprenticeship, day-release, correspondence courses, sandwich course, or short intensive course basis and will vary in duration from six months to four years. The same principle should be applied with greater force at the post-class X level."⁵

⁵ Report, p. 376, para. 15.35.



The Commission points out that courses of this kind offered in the United Kingdom total more than 200. In the Soviet system, parallel to the 7-year and 10-year secondary courses, evening schools for rural youth and part-time schools for working youth are open to students aged 7 and over. Or, they can join evening and correspondence courses after completing the secondary course at the age of 17, if they are employed. In India, we have also a system of apprenticeship training which, as the Education Commission suggests, needs to be greatly expanded. The agencies which might offer such training programmes and provide facilities for the same are the established industries, professional organizations and educational institutions. Just as it is now a recognized practice, enforced by law, for organized industries employing a substantial labour force to appoint Labour or Welfare-Officers as members of the regular staff, it may similarly be made incumbent on these industries to entertain the services of qualified training officers to organize supplementary or on-the-job training for workers as well as others who may not find time to join a regular polytechnic on a whole-time basis. In this effort, not only the organised private sector industries, including particularly the large industrial undertakings and public utility concerns or those that receive substantial Government aid, assistance or patronage, but also the public sector undertakings like Railways, Ordnance Factories, Posts and Telegraphs and other State undertakings can be invited to participate in working out such schemes of training. This is a matter in which efforts as well as our targets are as yet much too modest to cause satisfaction. These should be more adequate, and better planned.

III

Technical Training and Employment

Industrial employment requires the following levels of skill in the workers :

- (i) Semi-skilled and skilled workers (including first-line supervisors).
- (ii) Technicians (diploma-holders), both supervisory and technological.

(iii) Engineers (graduates).

(iv) Specialists and research staff (including Design Engineers).

For the first two types, the training offered would correspond to the secondary and higher secondary levels. In other words, the general school course should offer convenient points where the diversion to a vocational or technical course can take place. In the U.S.A., students can join technical or vocational high schools after class VIII or class IX of the elementary (secondary) school stage while the higher-technical schools can be reached after graduation from the high schools (12-year course). In the U.S.S.R., there are two stages of entry to the vocational and technical schools, one at the age of 14 and the other at 17 after completion of the secondary course (10-class course). It is interesting in this connection to note the similarity between the situation faced by the Soviet authorities during 1951-55 and the situation faced by India even now. During these years, the Soviet authorities found that the expansion of 10-year secondary education resulted in higher educational institutions being unable to absorb the secondary school graduates. On the other hand, there was an acute shortage of skilled and semi-skilled labour to man the large number of plants and factories that were being built to meet the needs of the State. It was discovered that instead of taking jobs right away, many of the 70 per cent not absorbed in higher educational institutions stayed at home to appear at the next entrance examination to be held in the following year. Despite Soviet efforts to "re-orient" young people, the tradition persisted among them that those who had received a secondary education should not work with their hands. For example, of the 25,000 reported graduates from the Leningrad schools in 1953, only 400 were willing to take jobs in factories. Since the secondary school graduates had had no training for employment in the national economy, it was decided to make available one- and two-year vocational programmes (age-group 17-19) to attract greater numbers to the labour force. The new vocational training programme started on September 20, 1954, in technical schools (*tekhnicheskie uchilishcha*) geared to train junior technical personnel and qualified workers. In the same month, Soviet authorities reported admission of 88,000 ten-year school graduates to these programmes, 31,000 more than



in the previous year.* These schools, of course, stand outside of the basic vocational schools for the training of adolescents for industrial employment as semi-skilled and skilled workers. These are the *FZU* schools with courses of 12 to 18 months' duration with the purpose primarily to train workers for light industry. These are managed by plants and factories to which they are attached. Then there are the *FZO* schools (factory apprentices, age-group 16-19) offering courses of 6 months to 1 year irrespective of previous education for employment as semi-skilled workers for basic industries. Next, there are the 2-year trade schools open to boys and girls of the age group 14-17 (usually with 7-year elementary education); and lastly, there are the Railway schools, similar to the trade schools, for preparing machinists' helpers, traffic control workers, mechanics for the repair of locomotives and railroad cars and book-keepers. The last three types of schools are, however, under the Labour Reserves Administration which operates through the current Soviet method of planned, compulsory labour recruitment. This method, of course, is not readily available to the democratic set-up of the Indian Government. However, the Indian employment situation being what it is, with snow-balling unemployment figures, and general education expanding at a rapid rate, it may not be necessary to use methods of compulsion. The logic of circumstances clearly indicates a shift in attitude towards industrial employment. Rather, the demand for many years has been insistent that the number of technical institutions, and places in them, have to be vastly increased, and employment opportunities created on a very large scale in trade, commerce and industry, to absorb the large number of young people knocking from door to door in search of jobs. It is, in this country not a case of jobs chasing workers but workers running after elusive jobs.

In adjusting education to employment opportunities, there should be a clear appreciation of the prevailing situation and the changes we wish to bring about in it. In India, there is also a psychological aspect of the problem. The traditional attitude of the Indian people

* See *Education in the U.S.S.R.*, p. 138 (published by the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Office of Education, Washington).

towards liberal education, the value that is attached to a University degree, or more generally speaking, at a pass in the public examinations, whether held by the Secondary Board or the University, the social prestige that a graduate still enjoys in a community with an inordinately low level of literacy, the requirement of a University degree in most of our public appointments to the higher or administrative cadres of service, the desire of the backward social classes to rise in status (many of them, in the process, leaving their traditional occupations)—all these psycho-social factors stand in the way of a straightforward and rational solution of the problem of unemployment. This, however, is the negative aspect of the problem. The positive aspect derives from the fact that serious efforts are being made to study the employment potential of each industry together with the nature or kind of employment that is available. At the same time, manpower needs have to be studied sector-wise in the context of our developmental plans. Having regard to the enormous " backlog " of unemployment in our country, it will be necessary to take effective measures without further loss of time to create additional employment opportunities. This means that our developmental plans must for many years remain employment-oriented. Since our economy is predominantly agricultural, the largest number of such opportunities must inevitably be developed in the various branches of agricultural arts, practices and technology or in agro-industries.

Here we come up against a number of hurdles. One is that there is a pronounced aversion of the educated Indian towards agricultural occupations. The general desire is towards finding a white collar job in a city or an urban area. A policy of gradual " urbanisation " of the countryside through the development of industrial complexes and the effort, through technological improvements, to raise the status of farming which would ultimately lead to the emergence of a class of " gentlemen-farmers " who would settle on the soil and be the spearhead of a new agrarian revolution based on the employment of scientific knowledge and techniques, may possibly lead to a more enlightened attitude towards this type of employment. Another hurdle which must be overcome is the lack of a rural bias in the educational system. To some extent, the Wardha Scheme of basic education was designed to serve this purpose. So was also the decision to introduce the " agricultural stream " in our Higher

Secondary Schools following the recommendations of the Secondary Education Commission. The decision to start Agricultural Universities, e.g. at Kalyani, Ludhiana, Patnagar (U.P.), Bhuvaneswar etc. carried the resolve to extend agricultural education to the highest stages of such education. But they have failed to make the desired impact on the practice of Indian agriculture. Our basic schools have not made much headway as the Mudaliar Commission has pointed out. So far as the higher secondary schools are concerned, the agriculture stream has not proved popular either ; in fact, only about 25 per cent of the total number of secondary schools in the country were converted to the higher secondary level by the end of the Third Plan. In any case, the Education Commission has recommended the abolition of all "streams" at the secondary or higher secondary level.

As regards Universities having an agricultural faculty with extension services, these, again, are not well supported and the general atmosphere does not permit the adoption of bold and imaginative measures. Last of all, but not least, is the general apathy of the public. To a great extent this apathy may yield to interest through a wider dissemination of information as to the facilities available for technical or vocational training and the opportunities of gainful employment that await the students on successful completion of their training. The relation between such training and increasing the productivity of agriculture and allied industries should also be brought home to the farmer and the industrialist. This would be one of the main tasks of the Extension Services of the Universities in their Agricultural Faculties in co-operation with the Departments of Agriculture.

Recent statistics show a heartening trend. The results of a survey⁷ carried out on the socio-economic conditions of students admitted to 341 vocational, technical and professional institutions of India in 1965 show that 42 per cent of the students attending these schools came from the rural areas and that 27.9 per cent of the parents were agriculturists by occupation. The smallest contribution was made by the professional classes.

⁷ Education Commission (1964-66), p. 119, Table 6.4.

From the point of view of income groups, it is equally significant that, as another survey showed, 75 per cent of the students joining the technical institutions came from parents with an income not exceeding Rs. 300/- p.m. Parents with an income of Rs. 600/- p.m. or more prefer to send their boys to the more expensive of the institutions like the Indian Institutes of Technology (58.7 per cent). The total number of students enrolled in the institutions covered by the survey was 87,358 of which 2,574 belonged to the I.I.T.'s. In the Agricultural Colleges, the largest number of students (58.7 per cent) had parents with incomes of less than Rs. 150 p.m. Still another desideratum of introducing technology in the rural areas is to locate a large number of vocational and technical institutes as near as possible to the fields and the workshops. Guidance or Counselling services also need to be expanded and made available to the people of the rural areas and there should be intelligent propaganda work by Field Service units with appropriate audio-visual aids. Such services should, as the Secondary Education Commission had recommended, be made available in an increasing measure to all educational institutions as well.

In the effort to relate technical training to the needs of industries, care should be taken to see that there is no over-production of training in particular skills. At present training of semi-skilled and skilled workers is provided mainly in the Industrial Training Institutes (I.T.I.'s) which have at present a total enrolment capacity for 1,13,000 trainees spread over 366 schools. There is also the Apprenticeship Training Scheme under the Apprentices Act of 1961. The provisions of this Act are limited to trades notified as "designated trades". They will not apply to "any graduate or diploma-apprentice undergoing training in accordance with any scheme framed by or with the approval of the Government" or to "any special apprenticeship scheme for imparting training in non-designated trades". Besides these, there are the junior technical schools, technical high schools and trade schools providing training in various kinds of skill. The fourth Five-Year Plan intends to double the annual output capacity of the I.T.I.'s. Efforts are also being made to revise their courses in the light of detailed job specifications. These courses include both engineering and non-engineering courses. A middle school pass is considered sufficient for entry to a large majority of trades,



the Matriculation being prescribed as the minimum in respect of the remaining trades. The minimum age of entry is 15. The Education Commission has proposed that the available places in these institutes should be more than doubled, that the minimum age of entry to the I.T.I.'s should be reduced to 14 and the courses should be so adjusted as to permit admission of students completing even the primary course. But the Commission has repeatedly stressed that, except in special cases, the technical institutes should provide a type of education which should be predominantly terminal in character. These courses should be terminal in the sense that trainees completing the course should qualify for direct entry into employment. This warning is quite appropriate. Students taking the existing higher secondary course in the technical stream often revert to the general stream, thus wasting their time and energy for a fruitless education which, however, has cost this nation of scarce resources a lot of money. It seems to me, however, that the Commission has addressed the warning to the wrong quarters. If an expensive technical or vocational training proves infructuous, it is not the fickleness of the student body that is so much at fault as the unplanned way in which the whole concept of technical education as part of the higher secondary course has been put into effect in our country. For instance, students passing the higher secondary course in the technical stream very often fail to secure admission to the higher technical institutes, even to polytechnics. The reason is that these institutes do not have enough seats to accommodate all the applicants. The Commission's warning will be justified only if all the technical school graduates (degree, diploma or certificate) are assured of employment at the proper levels. The Education Commission itself records its finding that "many graduate engineers are in fact doing what should be regarded as technician type of work."* The Employment Exchanges carry a not negligible list of technically qualified, but unemployed, personnel including engineers. This is the result of an unplanned outturn of technical skills. There is also lack of co-ordination between different types of training and the employment market, with the result that while there is an excess

* *Ibid*, p. 373.

supply of technicians in certain lines, there is a shortage of skilled workers in others.

IV

Employment Pattern and Manpower Needs

It is the business of all kinds of technical education to be employment-oriented. A further study of the question seems to be called for in the context of India's manpower needs, a point that was mentioned in the preceding section.

The present employment pattern can be gleaned from the estimates prepared on the basis of investigations as part of a longer study carried out by the Planning Unit of the Indian Statistical Institute, New Delhi, and the Unit for Economic and Statistical Studies on Higher Education, London School of Economics, in collaboration with the Perspective Planning Division of the Planning Commission. These have been included in the Report of the Education Commission.⁹ According to the results published, a total working force of 188,676,000 had the following employment pattern in 1961 :

TABLE II¹⁰
(Figures in '000)

<i>Industry Group</i>		<i>Below Matric</i>	<i>Matri- culates</i>	<i>Inter- mediates</i>	<i>Graduates</i>
1. Agriculture	..	130,648	381	46	67
2. Mining, etc.	..	5,143	68	5	6
3. Manufacturing	..	19,377	436	89	104
4. Construction	..	1,911	99	30	19
5. Trade and Commerce	..	7,009	452	101	92
6. Transport & Communications		2,528	318	80	93
7. Services (Other)	..	16,895	1,509	405	765
Total	..	183,511	3,262	756	1,147

(Source : ISI/LSE Paper.)

⁹ *Ibid.*, Report, Chap. V ; Supplementary Volume I, Part V.

¹⁰ Education Commission Report, p. 93.

The table shows that there were nearly 5.2 million workers with qualifications equivalent to Matriculation and above, of whom more than 50 per cent. were employed in "other" services, such as public services, educational services, medical and health services, religious and welfare services, legal services, etc. Of the total number of workers, about two-thirds were employed in urban areas and one-third in rural areas. Another point is that only one in five (1.1 million) of these workers were graduates and these were heavily concentrated in service occupations (7,65,000 out of a total of 1,147,000). Finally, expressed in terms of percentage, 97.3 per cent. of the total working force were non-matriculates.

As against these figures of actual employment pattern, reference may be made to the ISI/LSE Paper—also quoted by the Education Commission ¹¹—for the estimated requirement of Matriculates and above by industries. The projections are made with reference to the years 1975-76 and 1985-86 as against the actuals for 1960-61. These are prepared on the basis of the targets of economic growth proposed by the Perspective Planning Division of the Planning Commission for the respective periods. The over-all annual growth rates are assumed to be 6.6 per cent. from 1961-76 and 7 per cent. from 1961-1986. Within these over-all growth targets, sectoral targets vary from 11.85 per cent. (factory establishments including power supply) and 11.24 per cent. (construction) to 3.86 per cent. (agriculture) during the period 1961-76. So far as the "Service" occupations are concerned, a growth rate of 4 per cent. a year is assumed for those in public administration and defence. The need for teachers (educational services) is based on assumptions and estimates of enrolment of students, pupil-teacher ratios and qualifications of teachers. Their growth rate also takes account of population growth and national income. The proportion of doctors is estimated to be one doctor for 3,000 population in 1975-76 and one for 2,000 in 1985-86.

Tabulating the results on the basis of educational qualifications (leaving aside the non-matriculates), it is estimated that the requirement of matriculate workers should increase from 5.2 millions in

¹¹ *Ibid.*, Report, p. 94.

1961 to 16.6 million in 1976 and 32.6 million in 1986, and that of graduate workers should increase from 1.1 million in 1961 to 3.3 million in 1976 and 6.5 million in 1986. The detailed (break-up) figures are given below (figures for 1960-61 which have already been reproduced in the table II are excluded from this table) :

TABLE III
ESTIMATED REQUIREMENTS OF MATRICULATES AND ABOVE BY
INDUSTRIES, 1975-76 AND 1985-86
(in 000's)

<i>Industry Group</i>	(1975-76)			(1985-86)		
	Matric.	Inter.	Graduates	Matric.	Inter.	Graduates
1. Agriculture	681	83	120	984	120	174
2. Mining	282	20	27	632	45	61
3. Manufacturing	2,880	584	707	6,681	1,355	1,642
4. Construction	503	150	97	1,131	337	218
5. Trade and Commerce.	1,181	262	240	2,565	570	522
6. Transport & Communications.	1,200	301	354	2,608	654	769
7. Services (Other)	4,147	1,040	- 1,754	6,677	1,653	3,156
Total ..	10,874	2,440	3,299	21,278	4,734	6,542

(Source : ISI/LSE Paper, Education Commission Report, p. 94.)

In view of the large increase in demand for workers with the qualification of matriculation and above, the need arises for examining these figures with reference to the total stock and outturn of the respective categories of workers. These figures have also been collected from the ISI/LSE paper and presented in Table 5.3 of the Education Commission's Report.¹² On the assumption that the proportion of educated men and women who are at work will remain the same as it was in 1961, the Commission, after pointing out that the *total* number of those who are matriculates and above would grow

¹² Education Commission Report, p. 95.



from 8 million in 1961 to 27 million in 1976 and 56 million in 1986 (or at the annual growth rate of 8.3 per cent. up to 1976 and 7.5 per cent. in the following decade) and that the total number of graduates would grow from 1.5 million in 1961 to 4.5 million in 1976 and 9 million in 1986 (or at a steady annual growth rate of 7.5 per cent. compared to 6 per cent. throughout the 1950's), proceeds to observe :

" In general, the output from the educational system needed to produce this pattern of stocks should grow at the same rate as the required stock. The exception is the output of matriculates up to 1976 which grows rather faster than the required stock as the actual output in 1961 was below that required if stock targets were to be met. Overall, the annual output of matriculates should grow from 0.6 million in 1961 to 4.8 million in 1986 and that of graduates from 0.1 million to nearly 0.8 million. The percentage of each age group who matriculate should rise from 7 per cent to 27 per cent and those who graduate from 1.5 per cent to nearly 5 per cent.

" On the other hand, the *proportion* of those completing class VII who go on to be matriculates and graduates must fall. This is because of the very substantial expansion of numbers in class VII as the Constitutional Directive on free and compulsory education is implemented. If the transition proportions (that is, those matriculating and graduating as a percentage of those in class VII) remain fixed even when all children complete class VII, *the stocks of educated manpower would be well in excess of manpower needs*. This would become specially serious from mid 1970's onwards : by 1986 there would be 4 million 'too many' matriculates and 1.5 million 'too many graduates.' " (*Italics mine*)¹³

These estimates refer to workers with general educational qualifications, not the engineering or agricultural graduates. The problem posed here is to relate the manpower to employment needs. The following table shows the estimated total employment in India as in 1960-61 and the future projections for the years 1975-86 according to the ISI/LSE paper quoted by the Education Commission :

¹³ Education Commission Report, p. 95. According to one estimate, at present there are about 30,000 unemployed engineers of whom about 18,000 have passed out from I.I.T.'s. The present annual output of Matriculates (or those of equivalent standards) is of the order of 600,000 to 700,000 while that of under-graduates is about 200,000. In Delhi, the *per capita* expenditure from public funds on engineering graduates comes to about Rs. 20/25,000.

TABLE IV¹⁴

<i>Industry</i>	(1)	<i>All workers</i>	<i>Workers aged 15 and above</i>		
		1960-61 (2)	1960-61 (3)	1975-76 (4)	1985-86 (5)
1. Agriculture		135,444	123,817	144,462	144,462
2. Mining and Manufacturing		20,927	19,202	40,696	63,861
3. Construction		2,059	1,992	6,653	9,273
4. Trade and Commerce		7,654	7,500	12,135	18,764
5. Transport and Communications		3,019	2,995	6,882	11,525
6. Services (Others)		19,572	18,697	32,906	45,210
Total		188,675	174,203	243,734	293,095

The Commission, however, calculates¹⁵ that with all the expansion of education proposed, the proportion of all educated workers (matriculates and above) to the total working force, will rise from 2.7 per cent. in 1960-61 to just over 11 per cent. by 1985-86. We need not compare these figures with the corresponding figures of the levels of education reached by the workers in the advanced Western countries or in Japan. We can easily guess.

The educational aspect of manpower in relation to employment opportunities may be best expressed by stating that the country's educational system should have a dynamic relation to job requirements. This would require careful projection of the employment pattern, say, on a 10-year basis, and to regulate the intake and output of educational institutions, both general and technical, so that the risk of carrying an uncomfortably large surplus in certain lines and bottlenecks (due to shortage of labour) in others—which are likely to create acute socio-economic as well as political problems—is, as far as possible, obviated by perspective planning of our educational efforts. There is some incongruity, for instance, in the Commission's forecast, which, I daresay, is perfectly justified on the statistical evidence available, that the proportion of educated people among our labour force even in 1985-86 would be far too small (11 per cent.) while at the same time there would be 4 million "too many" matriculates and 1.5 million "toomany" graduates! But, of

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 102.

course, where the "labour force cohort" (*i.e.* the boys and girls who attain the age of 16 or over and enter the labour force in a given year) is itself "too large" (in the words of the Education Commission)—about 2 per cent. of the total population, owing to the high birth rate—the qualitative improvement of the labour force would only have what may be called substitution effect. The character of the unemployed would change; that is all. Even then the scope of employing say, graduates, would be limited by the nature of the jobs to be performed and the preferences and competence of the graduate job-seekers for particular jobs. As long as our industrial system continues to be labour-intensive, a large part of the works programme of a factory or other establishment would continue to require a low level of intelligence and a large element of manual operation, making it costly, in the immediate context, for the employer to engage a graduate where a so-called class IV operative would perfectly meet the requirements. Even where skilled work is required, it should be borne in mind that such work, to be of full value, would very often require the use of sophisticated tools and machinery to which the working class as a whole are not quite receptive lest it should cause displacement of (unskilled) labour. The Commission, in fact, begs the question when they blandly demand that "arrangements should be made to ensure that higher educated manpower cohorts will not remain unemployed or wastefully under-employed", and that employment "should be made available as nearly as may be in those capacities in which they are able to make the best use of the educational preparation given to them". In fact, this is a statement of the problem, not a solution of it. And its solution may range from family planning to the establishment of an enlightened totalitarian order which alone, as things are, might possibly be in a position to give every new graduate a job voucher in addition to the diploma. This, incidentally, is also one of the recommendations of the Education Commission, *minus* of course, the dictatorship. In fact, the Commission goes further and visualises the young graduate being confronted with the possibility of multiple job offers and a grace period of three years to make up his mind.¹⁸

¹⁸ Education Commission Report, p. 106.

This, indeed, would be very near a *Utopia*, alike for the frustrated degree-holder, the anxious guardian, the harassed Government and a disturbed society. The only exception would probably be the employers.

It is a tragic commentary on the existing situation that we consider what the Commission presumably regards as the ultimate solution of the educational problem as Utopian. "Full employment" is the goal of present-day economic policy. There are countries which have, indeed, more or less, reached this goal. Some of them even depend on immigrant labour, at any rate to fill up the lower ranks of workers and technicians. England is stated to be in short supply of teachers. The point is that in India, too, there is an over-all shortage of skilled labour as well as of expertise.¹⁷ But India is an under-developed country with extremely limited arrangements for the production of skill. Full employment is possible only in developed countries where all savings are fully invested, and where investments have produced a chain reaction in the entire educational system for creating the necessary skills.

India is now a developing country with a huge investment programme to wipe out the backlog of centuries. The Five-Year Plans are sustaining these efforts. Our national educational programme should form an integral part of our Five-Year Plans enjoying, if I may say so, the topmost priority. The Perspective Planning Division of the Planning Commission should re-set the perspectives, so that, having defined and identified the skills that India would require for her developmental plans, a determined lead might be given to the educational system to rearrange its priorities and redefine its over-all objective. To develop fully the capacities of the individual certainly continues to be the underlying objective of all education. Why, therefore, should not the individual expect that his education is so organised as to provide him, at the end of his education, with employment that would enable him to make full use of his powers. This is just what the Education Commission has pro-

¹⁷ The unbalanced character of the present availability of technical skill is exemplified by the fact that the existing ratio of engineers to technicians is 1 : 1.4. The Education Commission's target is 1 : 3 or 1 : 4 to be reached by 1986. It is no wonder that many of our engineers have to accept positions which be better fulfilled by technicians : a sort of disguised unemployment among our engineering graduates !



posed. Its suggestion that every graduate should be given an offer of appointment along with his degree is only to underline the need for a direct link between education and employment. This, in the words of the Commission, is meant to convey that "a compulsion on the State to make such an offer would be the surest guarantee that the output of the educational system is closely linked with employment opportunities or manpower needs".

We need not, however, labour this point, particularly as the close nexus between education and employment is not disputed. The nexus may be traced in the following way. Full employment depends ultimately on the maximisation of the productivity of a country by the fullest utilisation of its resources, both material and human. It is sustained through a self-generating economy. Now, production creates jobs and jobs require skill. Therefore, if education is to assist in national economic development, it must help in producing the desired skills, vocational, technical and professional. Even those jobs for which a liberal education, or a good University degree, was previously considered to be sufficient are now making a demand for special types of education to produce the necessary skills in this age of increasing specialization. For instance, we have now the Administrative Staff Colleges, courses in Business Management, even courses in Secretarial Practice or in Home Science. While humanistic studies, or a liberal education, will continue to be valued for their own sake, the present emphasis is on correlating education with employment. The main concern, in other words, is with the production of technical skills of which the country is in such desperate need. It is, therefore, mainly in the direction of the expansion of technical education in India that we should expect our statisticians and educational planners to devote their urgent attention. This is the nexus that we should, as a matter of urgency, make every effort to develop.

V

Towards a National Policy: Proposals of the Education Commission

(a) Hurdles against Full Employment

The Planning Commission of India had calculated that during the third Five-Year Plan there would be 14 million new entrants

into the labour force which together with 3 million of backlog¹⁸ presents a formidable challenge to a Democratic Socialist State. There is no doubt that in the coming years the challenge would take on a still more formidable proportion. Calculations suggest that the Fourth Five-Year Plan would have to provide for 23 million jobs (as against 17 million under the third Plan).¹⁹ Latest available figures show that of the total working force of nearly 189 millions, Government employment accounts for 3.55 million (Central Government .82 million and State Governments 2.73 million), Factory employment covers 3.76 million (Government and Local Fund establishment 539,000 and other 3,225,000) and Railways 1.17 million. These are the biggest employers, but they, between them, absorb a labour force of 8.48 millions out of a total of 189 millions. The figures relate to 1960-61. It is, however, estimated that about 105 million workers are employed in rural occupations, while of those in the urban areas as many as 25/30 million might be self-employed and/or employed as wage earners in petty trades. Apart from those who have found employment in factories (3.76 million) there are about double this number (7.2 million) working in other establishments.

A planned policy of employment must carefully work out the job potential of each industry, determine the growth rates and present an approximate picture of the employment situation as it is likely to develop, say on a decennial basis. Such attempts have already been made by the Perspective Planning Division of the Planning Commission and the studies jointly carried out by the Planning Unit of the Indian Statistical Institute and the Unit for Economic and

¹⁸ The estimates vary. The Government of India Reference Annual, *India*, puts the figure of the backlog of unemployment at the beginning of the Third Plan at 90 lakhs (0.9 millions) and the number of new entrants to the labour force at 1.5 to 1.8 crores (15 to 18 million). This difference in figures does not, however, vitiate the main argument.

¹⁹ The draft of the Fourth Five-Year Plan (1966-71) estimated (on the basis of the proposed investment of Rs. 21,500-Rs. 22,500 crores) that the employment potential in the non-agricultural sector would be around 15.5 to 16.2 millions against the requirement of 35 million employment opportunities with a backlog of 12 millions at the beginning of the Plan and an addition of 23 million to the labour force. With the proposed scaling down of the investment programme the employment potential of the fourth Plan will be much less than the original figure.



Statistical Studies on Higher Education of the London School of Economics, already referred to in the preceding section. The picture disclosed is naturally disquieting. The full impact of the third Five-Year Plan is yet to be worked out. It is, however, estimated that 90 per cent of the target of additional employment (agricultural employment 3.5 million and non-agricultural employment 10.5 million) will have been achieved by the end of the Plan period. In fact, the revised estimate puts the achievement at a still higher figure. Future progress depends on the success we achieve in bringing off an adequate rate of economic growth. The Perspective Planning Division of the Planning Commission has assumed an over-all growth rate of 6.6 per cent a year from 1961-76 and 7 per cent a year for the whole period 1961-86. Within these over-all targets, sectoral targets (for agriculture, industry, power, construction etc.) have also been fixed. The snag lies in the question of whether India is going to reach that growth rate. A forecast is difficult because ever since the Second Plan period, our development plans have been persistently plagued by the vagaries of Nature as well as human failures. Much of the benefits that might still have accrued in spite of these draw-backs have, however, been eroded by a runaway increase of India's population in recent years. Defence spending has also made large inroads into the investible funds for accelerating our productive efforts, thus intensifying the already acute inflationary situation. Devaluation (1966) has caused the latest set-back. An anticipated average growth rate of 7 per cent over 1961-86 may thus prove to be no more than a guess. In this connection, it would be pertinent to quote from the first Five-Year Plan on the question of employment in relation to development. The Plan states :

"A programme of full employment at rising real wages can get into swing only as capital formation in the country goes up.....aggregate income will have to be stepped up continually in the succeeding periods if employment opportunities in the economy are to expand rapidly. The elimination of unemployment in an under-developed economy is by its nature a somewhat long-term problem. It can be solved only through steady and persistent effort. Expansion of employment opportunities is, in the last analysis, a function of the rate at which national output is being raised, and it is for this reason that a Plan of development for a particular period has to be viewed as part of a bigger programme on an accelerated rate. Unemployment is, however, an immediate problem. It has to be approached from a

broad social point of view. It is also necessary that in determining the distribution of capital in new lines, their capacity to absorb labour should be given special attention and the need to increase employment opportunities in the short run as well as the larger pattern of development necessary for an expanding economy kept constantly in view. (*Summary*, p. 6)

It may be added that our Planners, in working out the growth rates failed to anticipate certain pitfalls which operated to the prejudice of the over-all national interest. One of these is that the national income figures become unreal when they conceal the undesirable shifts of income that planning policies have—shall we say, unwittingly—encouraged. These shifts have been partly caused by the uneven impact of the inflationary spiral on the different classes of the population. These have also been caused by the operation of a regime of controls, in particular import controls, which have transferred incomes as monopoly gains or other forms of illicit earnings, to the benefit of the upper-income groups²⁰ : and finally, by the way our public sector undertakings have worked. It would be pertinent to ask whether care has been taken to see that the development of the public sector industries does not act as an ouster of private firms, resulting in the creation of substantial idle capacities and unemployment, or that the boosting of production at uneconomic costs does not result in large inventories of unsaleable products. These are factors that erode employment potentialities of investment either because capital is locked up or because it is used up in "conspicuous consumption" which does not aid production, or it may lead to the circulation of "black money" with similar effect.

Education becomes one of the first casualties in this process. For one thing, it retards investment in education and other social services which, as we know, are on a low priority list ; for another, it creates an evil and vicious atmosphere in society as well as a

²⁰ It is stated that the import licenses issued to the Private Sector, that is, private parties, sell at a premium of 300 to 700 per cent in respect of 10 per cent of the licenses and about 200 per cent in respect of the rest (*The Economic Times*, 31-3-66). Prof. B. R. Shenoy calculates that "the income shifts on account of import licenses on Private Sector imports—which averaged Rs. 625 crores annually during 1961-62 to 1964-65—may be of an annual order of Rs. 470 crores. (B. R. Shenoy : *Fifteen Years of Indian Planning*, pp. 6-7, Forum of Free Enterprise, Bombay).

general sense of failure and frustration which cannot but affect young minds. It must be stated that technical education, including research in the applied sciences and technology, engineering and medicine, cannot be had cheap and if investments are not stepped up by a very careful and judicious control over the transference of resources, the future of the country would be very dark indeed. A not inconsiderable part of the responsibility for the criminal ease with which the subversive elements in our society have been able to utilise and exploit the student community, particularly in the big cities, must ultimately devolve on faulty planning.

This digression, though not strictly relevant to the subject matter of this chapter is, nevertheless, justified by the fact that the overall economic system in which we are functioning will also be a determinant of the system of technical education that this country can support. For instance, in the allocation of resources, the importance of education and, in particular, the education that creates the skills that are required for progress in science and technology and which to-day form the basis of industrial development must, without further delay, receive due and effective recognition. Whether we want to improve India's agriculture or industry or transport, or any other field of constructive activity, we would require hundreds and thousands of technicians, supervisors, machinemen, lathemen, overseers, scientific assistants, engineers etc., just as we shall require armies of accountants, management consultants, labour officers, public relations staff, teachers and the like. Each of these has now to do a specialised job requiring special types of skill which the old traditional system could hardly cope with. As the Mudaliar Commission has aptly pointed out : "The greatest wealth of a country is not to be found in the bowels of the earth but in the ingenuity and skill of the people." Otherwise how would we explain the advance to prosperity of countries which suffer from a comparative lack of physical resources ? Indeed, from the point of view of the individual, real education is worth while to the extent that he develops the capacity of planning, executing and finally achieving something which accelerates the forward march of the nation. This, of course, would require heavy investment. The Third Five-Year Plan had allocated Rs. 142 crores for technical education. The Fourth Plan in its original allotment provided for Rs. 250 crores. This was out of a total provision of Rs. 1,260

crores for education suggested in the draft Plan. Yet without proper co-ordination of education with employment, a good part of this huge expenditure is likely to go down the drain and involve the country in a huge loss of resources.

(b) Technical Education—the New Proposals

In framing a national system of technical education, the following points will need expert attention :

- (1) Organization and Planning.
- (2) Types of Institutions to suit different types of requirements.
- (3) Recognition of the inter-dependent character of technical skills.
- (4) Rectification of imbalances and integration with general education.
- (5) Question of standards : mechanization.

Let us briefly discuss each of these points.

(1) *Organization.* Under the Constitution of India, technical education falls partly under the Union List (entries 64-66), partly under the State List (entry 11) and partly under Concurrent List (entry 25) of the Seventh Schedule. The State is responsible for the general entry "Education including Universities" subject to the entries in the Union and Concurrent Lists. The Union Government is responsible for institutions for scientific and technical education financed by the Government of India wholly or in part and declared by Parliament by Law to be institutions of national importance (entry 64); Union agencies and institutions for professional, vocational or technical training (entry 65); and co-ordination and determination of standards in institutions for higher education and research, and scientific and technical institutions (entry 66). The entry 25 in the list of Concurrent subject is "Vocational and technical training of labour". That is the present constitutional position. It suffers from the defect that the responsibilities regarding technical education are not clearly demarcated. But since the Centre has the power to lay down standards, to maintain institutes of national importance and to co-ordinate the Central and State policies, its voice is decisive in these spheres.



The main instrument for carrying out the policy of the Government of India in regard to technical education is the All-India Council of Technical Education (established 1945). In its post-war Plan for Educational Development in India (1944) the Central Advisory Board of Education emphasised the need for planning technical education at the higher stages on an all-India basis for industrial growth and recommended the establishment of an all-India body "to stimulate, co-ordinate and control the provision of the educational facilities which such a development as well as existing industry will need." It was thus that the All-India Council of Technical Education came into being. To-day it has the Union Minister of Education as Chairman and representatives of the State Governments at the Ministerial level among its members with the Technical Division of the Ministry of Education as its Secretariat. It discharges its functions with the help of a Co-ordination Committee as well as four Regional Committees (North, East, West, South) and 8 Boards of Studies (previously there were 6). The All-India Council is charged with the duty of surveying the needs of the country as a whole for higher technical education and advising as to the areas where the technical institutions should be located and for what branches of technology each should provide and up to what standard they should operate. It prepares integrated plans of development of technical institutions, those for specialised courses and of other institutions of all-India importance, and aids, financially or otherwise, State Governments, Universities and other non-Government agencies in setting up technical institutions. The functions of the Regional Committees include provision of surveying facilities for technical education at all stages including establishment of new institutions wherever necessary, tendering advice and guidance to institutions in the region, promoting liaison between the institutions and industry and assisting the States and institutions in securing practical training facilities. Lastly, the Boards of Studies advise the All-India Council in academic aspects such as the minimum standards of instructional facilities necessary for conducting the various courses. They frame schemes of courses and examinations in various subjects both at the level corresponding to degrees of the University and for training of supervisory personnel. The Technical Division of the Education Ministry with its regional offices, besides acting as the Secretariat

of the All-India Council, implements the Government's policies and programmes at the same time.

The Education Commission, however, is critical of the way in which the All-India body is functioning. It refers to the infrequency of its meetings as well as those of the co-ordinating Committee and also to the unwieldy composition of the Council. The latter, it is complained, hardly meets even once a year. The Boards, on the other hand, do work which is normally done by University Boards. The Commission proposes the replacement of the All-India Council by a U.G.C. type body. Its aim is to place the responsibility of stimulation and organization of higher technical education on the Universities and institutions themselves with scope for experimentation and innovation. This recommendation should, no doubt, commend itself to educational opinion but the point should not be missed that technical education has other than a mere (to borrow the phrase of R. A. Gopalaswami, member of the Education Commission) "academic-pedagogical interest." There are the industrial and occupational interests to consider. The success or failure of a scheme of technical training—particularly of the higher variety—requires a practical understanding of the various problems that particular industries may be facing which may ultimately require a re-orientation of the technical courses. It would be better to have a Manpower Unit attached to the important industries and the U.G.C. type body proposed by the Education Commission suitably constituted to accommodate representatives of industry, commerce and business, who would act in close liaison with those Manpower Units.

(2) *Types of Institutions and Skill* : The Mudaliar Commission thus tabulates the different types of skill which require special types of institutional care. Column 1 in the chart below indicates the type of students and column 2 indicates the type of technical school suitable to each type :

1 <i>Type of Students</i>	2 <i>Type of Technical Schools</i>
1. Students of Higher Secondary Schools in the four upper classes. (Classes IX-XII according to Report).	Technical High school or a multipurpose school. These schools should not be different from the ordinary high schools except that, besides giving training in core subjects like Language, Science,

1

Type of Students

2. Students who are unfit to pursue the full course of secondary education or who leave school for economic reasons and find it necessary to earn a living as quickly as possible.
3. Those who pass the Secondary School course and who desire to pursue technical education in polytechnics or occupational institutes without going to a University.
4. Those who belong to any of the above categories, are gainfully employed, and who wish to improve their prospects by part-time evening classes in subjects of their choice.
5. Training of craftsmen for industry

2

Type of Technical Schools

Mathematics and Social Studies, it will provide for Applied Mathematics and Geometrical Drawing, Elements of Workshop Technology and Elements of Mechanical and Electrical Engineering.

School of Industry or Trade-School teaching a number of trade courses in Mechanical and Electrical Engineering or other subjects (2 year certificate course).

Technical institutes plus some time in Engineering Colleges (Three-year Diploma Course).

At present (1953) wholly uncared for. (This lacuna has since been partly filled up. Part-time degree courses have been opened for diploma-holders at 19 selected centres).

"The integration of apprenticeship training in a factory and general and technical education in school should be an essential occupational training" (Report, p. 47).

The integrated system, mentioned against 5 above, represents, according to the Mudaliar Commission, a desirable aspect of development so far as technical and vocational education is concerned. The Commission suggests the following complementary measures for this purpose : (i) a well-conceived and well-organised system of apprenticeship training in various trades for the age group above 14 should be the normal feature of all industrial concerns ; and (ii) technical schools functioning at the same level as the normal secondary schools should be established for the benefit of the boy apprentices. Such schools should provide the apprentices with the required amount of technical education in the special trades as well

as general education on a part-time basis. The Commission suggests that for this purpose the schools should be located in close proximity to industries and should function in close co-operation with the industry concerned. The total period of apprenticeship-cum-technical school education may have a range of 4/5 years. In many countries, the Commission point out, apprenticeship training is by legislation made obligatory on all industrial concerns both for employers and employees. In some countries employers are directed by law to release apprentices for a full day or two half-days in a week for theoretical instruction in a technical institute. In other countries, trainees in technical institutes have of necessity to put in a period of apprenticeship in organised industry. To enable them to do so, legislation has been passed making it obligatory for the industry concerned to receive such apprentices and to see to their practical training in an organised manner and through selected personnel of the industry concerned.

The Education (Kothari) Commission's recommendations show important deviations from the pattern suggested by the Mudaliar Commission. For instance, the Commission, to start with, proposes to eliminate the "streams" from the Secondary and Higher Secondary courses. A new higher secondary course (classes XI-XII) is to be introduced—this will form part of the school course. The extra year (class XII) will be secured by abolishing the Pre-University classes in the Colleges. There is no provision for a technical course at any of the stages of the normal secondary course. On the other hand, the Commission's scheme of technical education is built on the premise that by 1986, some 20 per cent of all enrolments at the lower secondary level and 50 per cent beyond class X should enrol in part-time or full time vocational or professional courses. For this purpose the Commission suggests that the Central Government should make a "a strong effort to encourage boys and girls particularly in the age group 14-18 to follow vocational and technical courses". A concerted and sustained programme by all Ministries and Departments, says the Commission, is needed to interest parents and children in technical work, in vocational courses, in making technical careers attractive and in arousing public opinion to a sense of its needs and possibilities. These courses, as already indicated earlier, should be predominantly terminal in character, qualifying for direct

entry into employment, and "it should be clear to the parent, child, educator and employer what type of employment the trainee will qualify for". As regards the institutional set-up for technical education, the Commission recommends that the minimum admission age to the Industrial Training Institutes (I.T.I.'s) should be gradually lowered to 14, the available places in these Institutes should be doubled and the Junior Technical Schools which should be renamed Technical High Schools should offer courses clearly terminal in character. The training to be given in these schools must be production-oriented. There should be greater use of available time to meet the requirements of the Apprentice Act. Skilled workers' training courses with entry requirements below class X should also be attached to polytechnics to make better use of existing facilities. Polytechnics should be located only in industrial areas while those already functioning in the rural areas should develop courses allied to agriculture and agro-industries. Teachers for these schools should be increasingly recruited from industry. Their salaries should not be linked to academic qualifications only. Facilities for vocational and technical training for school-leavers entering employment should be greatly expanded on a part-time, day-release, correspondence, sandwich or short-intensive course basis in co-operation with industry. Courses for the training for technicians should be revised in the light of periodic investigations to be carried out in co-operation with industry, aimed at job analysis and specifications in terms of levels and clusters of skills and responsibilities for technicians. Courses should include those of special interest for girls. As regards training for vocations, the Commission points out that alongside the polytechnics and at the higher secondary school level (classes XI-XII) there is considerable scope for introducing courses in commercial, clerical, scientific and industrial trades. Students passing out of the Technical High Schools as well as Polytechnics should be encouraged to set up small industries of their own or join with others to start small-scale workshops, industries and services needed in the country.²¹

It is clear that the remedies proposed by the Education Commission as well as the Mudaliar Commission are long-term objects.

²¹ See Education Commission (1964-66) Report, pp. 658-59.

The former has realised the immediacy of the problem of present unemployment but has not spelled out the precise measures to tackle the problem in its imperative form. It is, however, obvious that the question cannot be solved on the educational plane alone. It involves the more fundamental questions of economic reconstruction, of rates of investment and economic growth, which in their very nature, are long-term problems. A few immediate steps can, however, be indicated. Our statistical organisation has to be improved to help us face this issue. There is also the problem of the 23 million persons who are likely to enter the labour force during the fourth Plan Period, plus the backlog of 12 million carried over from the previous years. Many of these would, no doubt, find employment ; a good number would not. Experience shows that some of the latter, may be a large number, would be skilled workers while the remaining would be unskilled. Our Employment Exchanges may, to some extent, give us a rough indication of the type of skills that appear to be surplus to our requirements. More important still, it would be possible to judge from enquiries made from time to time by the employers themselves from these Exchanges for a broad idea of the type of skills that are in short supply. The problem of the educated unemployed should receive special attention. This is universally acknowledged to be intimately connected with our educational policies. Only recently, the Education Minister of the Government of India disclosed in Parliament (July 26, 1967) that during the last three Five-Year Plans, the output of Matriculates and Graduates in Arts and Commerce has outstripped employment needs and that this has swelled the number of the educated unemployed. With all this relevant information in our possession, it should be possible to regulate the establishment of particular types of technical or vocational institutions deemed necessary to correct the existing imbalances. However, before actual effect is given to any decision in this respect, it would be necessary to make the statistical base more representative.

Taking a broad view of the situation, it would be necessary from the educational point of view (though this cannot be considered in strict isolation from its economic background) to devise a crash programme to bring the run-away figures of unemployment under control. The lines of immediate policy should include, above all,



a determined attack on the problem that the illiterate adults—who constitute the bulk of our unskilled labour—pose before society. The need for providing an adequate system of adult education reflects one of the emergent issues of educational planning. It may be argued that a rapid spread of adult education will merely add to the number of the "educated" unemployed. To this the answer is that adult education, while giving to the illiterate adults a basic general education (which should be a little more than a mere knowledge of the alphabets and numerals) is, necessarily, to be employment-oriented.

And that brings us to the crux of the problem. For the solution of the problem of general unemployment, our attention in the past has been too often diverted to wage-earning occupations. The absorption of a huge unemployed labour force wholly in such occupations is not to be expected in the foreseeable future. A present line of effort should lie in the expansion of the opportunities of self-employment. For the moment there does not appear to be a limit to the scope of such employment. Further, it may be possible, with adequate State help and some initial guidance and training in business practices, to open up numerous avenues of self-employment for the educated unemployed. It goes without saying that for this there should be a radical change in the traditional attitude of our educated classes towards certain forms of labour. Thanks to the introduction of labour-saving devices and new techniques of production, displacing manual labour to a considerable extent, the adverse attitude of our graduates towards factory labour or workshop jobs has already relaxed. But there are two other factors which still impede the solution of this problem. There is a certain reluctance of our educated classes to move out of their own home States to seek fortune outside of their States. The people of some of the States, like those in South India and the Punjab, are, of course, an exception. But they need not be an exception. Regionalism is a double-edged evil. It explains, on the one hand, our relative incapacity to adjust ourselves to unfamiliar conditions, a reflection of the absence of a pioneering spirit. It affects not only the free operation of the laws of supply and demand ; it damps pioneering spirit of the educated classes. The results of the competitive examinations for recruitment to the all-India Services and of admission tests to all-India Institutes are revealing in this respect.

The other aspect of regionalism acts in the reverse way and, to a great extent, conditions the first. It is the spirit of exclusiveness, reaching to the limits of localism, that characterises certain parts of the country in which the people coming from other areas are treated as unwelcome guests. It becomes difficult, in such circumstances, to think of India as one country with a common national citizenship. I must add, however, that this attitude of exclusiveness, this exhibition of parochialism, is not supported by nationalist leaders in the country or by the Government. But it is practised insidiously, covertly, and in not a few cases official policy also toes the line in so far as it can be done within the discretionary limits permitted by law. In such cases, it becomes difficult to enforce the fundamental rights. Of all the influences that impede the movement for the national integration parochialism is undoubtedly the worst.

The other factor which adversely affects our efforts to solve the problem of the educated unemployed is the language difficulty. With the different States switching over to their regional languages as the medium of communication throughout the State, it would be increasingly difficult for our educated classes to go and seek occupation outside of their home States unless they have a good command of the regional languages concerned, not merely the market variety of the same. The language of inter-communication for the educated classes has been, and I daresay, will be for a long time, English. It is evident that if English is banished, it would amount to an intellectual halt, while the present policy of linguistic regionalism will, from the point of view of employment opportunities for our educated unemployed, operate as a restrictive device, whatever its other merits. This problem is further discussed at length in a subsequent chapter.

(3) *Interdependence of technical skills* : It is not unoften that technical skill acquired in one line depends on the technical skill, or the products of such skill, in another line or several other lines. Thus a printer's skill must be matched with the skill of the workers producing the printing machine. The production of a book, apart from the writing of it, requires the services of the compositor, the printer, the blockmaker, the binder, the paper-maker. Facilities for technical education must, therefore, take note of the complementary character of many of the processes required in production in which the necessary skills have to be separately acquired. Failure to do so will result in



bottlenecks, holding up production ; or make us dependent on foreign sources of supply thereby involving an avoidable (because of faulty or incomplete planning) expenditure of foreign exchange, besides loss of trained manpower.

(4) *Rectification of imbalances and integration with general education* : This, again, is a national problem *par excellence*. The imbalances are of several kinds. One kind of imbalance—production of surplus skill in one line and shortage in a related and complementary line—has been touched upon in the preceding paragraph. This is, or may be, a problem of national dimension because in many cases skills may be native to a region or, on the other hand, facilities for acquiring such skills may not be confined to a single area. The Regional Committees of the Indian Council of Technical Education will, perhaps, be in a position to co-ordinate the development of related skills over a particular region, so that each region may, on the basis of the complementary character of certain trades or crafts, be made economically viable, if not self-sufficient. Another kind of imbalance may develop as between different regions. We have witnessed, for instance, the play of powerful pulls, on regional considerations, for the establishment of steel plants, refineries and other Centrally sponsored works in this State or that. In so far as these pulls develop out of a desire to correct certain original imbalances as between backward and industrially advanced areas, provided the schemes are viable, the case of the weaker regions should, no doubt, be favourably considered. Care should be taken, however, that in correcting one set of imbalances, other imbalances of a more serious nature are not created in the process, thus impeding the economic growth of the country as a whole. In such matters of conflict, a fully representative (of all the interests concerned) high-powered adjudication may be arranged to reach an acceptable, if not altogether satisfactory, solution. The primary consideration should be the interests of the country as a whole, though in the process of adjudication the regional interests and requirements need to be kept fully in view. A third kind of imbalance arises out of an uneven distribution of, or access to, technical skill, including the facilities for the creation of such skill, as between urban areas and rural areas.

Economists have now changed their views regarding the factors favourable for the localisation of industries. Industries have deve-

loped far away from the sources of raw materials. In the days of mechanization, even the supply of cheap labour which once operated as a decisive factor in colonial development is now facing the challenge of mechanical and electrical power. The supply of cheap power, modern methods of transport and marketing (exceeding local or regional barriers), introduction of labour-saving devices and sophisticated machinery, availability of technical and managerial skills, all these have provided a new impulse to industrial development. As a result we find a tendency towards dispersal of industry rather than its concentration at particular points. This has, in a sense, helped to correct locational or regional imbalances ; and the claims of rural *versus* urban areas may have to be re-examined in this new light. The developments just referred to have, however, not yet succeeded in altering the fundamentals of the Indian situation. The Indian industrial worker is still suspicious of mechanisation though, when properly trained, he can be as good as any worker in any part of the world. Further, he is rooted to the village and as he, the Indian worker, is going to be the key-point of India's industrial prosperity, arrangements need to be made for the development of his technical skills and aptitudes in a manner convenient to him as well as the creation of opportunities by which his skills may be, as far as possible, utilised in or near his own region. The development of communications, rural electrification schemes, improvement of village sanitation and health, provision of medical and hospital facilities, near his place of work, the existence of alternative avenues of employment, and enlightened direction—these are the requirements of the Indian situation. The recent policy of creating "industrial estates" or "satellite townships" may be usefully extended to the rural neighbourhood areas, which would not only facilitate planned development and utilisation of our limited resources but allow workers to commute from their places of residence to their work and back. In such cases, it would also be possible to set up industrial training institutes as well as polytechnics serving these estates or areas.

The integration of technical education with general education, may also be reviewed as a phase of imbalance. The Mudaliar Commission had tried to loosen the grip on our student community of an almost exclusively academic type of general education by providing



alternative courses of a technical or vocational nature at the end of the middle school (lower secondary) stage—say, at the age of 13 or 14—but the scheme did not work out the specifications. There were neither any firm offers of employment to the students successfully completing the higher secondary technical, agricultural or vocational courses nor were there enough seats in the existing polytechnics to accommodate all the applicants. The result was that after knocking from pillar to post, a large majority of them had to seek re-admission to the general science stream where, again they had, and still have, to face a number of difficulties regarding curricular re-adjustment. More important than that, under these circumstances, their 3-year training in a technical or vocational course would be lost to the country. A similar attempt was made to introduce a craft-based basic education under the Wardha scheme but, as the Mudaliar Commission itself pointed out, the scheme did not make much headway. The Kothari Commission has now proposed the scrapping of the "streams" so that there would be one uniform type of education for all. On the other hand, the Kothari Commission banks on the following methods to introduce students to the technical (or vocational) course in the following manner, *viz.*,

- (i) *Work experience* : This involves participation in some form of productive work under conditions approximating to those found in rural life situations to be introduced as an integral part of education at all stages. It will, in the words of the Commission, "provide a much needed corrective to the extremely academic and bookish character of present school education". In the lower classes of the primary school, work experience may begin as simple hand-work while in the senior classes it may take the form of learning a craft. The work experience should be so organised that it is not "largely frozen around certain crafts," the main defect of the Basic Education Scheme. To make this scheme successful, special institutions should be set up for the training of teachers which may include trained craftsmen ; all secondary schools should be provided with workshops ; schools should also have attached farms wherever

possible—if not, arrangements should be supplied with standardised tools and simple equipment.²²

- (ii) By 1986, some 20 per cent of all enrolments at the lower secondary levels and some 50 per cent beyond class X should be in part-time or full-time vocational and professional courses. To secure this, the Commission recommends "a concerted and sustained programme by all Ministries and Departmentsto interest parents and children in technical work, in vocational course, in making technical careers attractive and in informing public opinion of needs and possibilities."²³ The diversion into vocational education at the school stage should be terminal in character though there might be, in exceptional cases and in the interests of an extra-ordinarily gifted child, opportunities for further study to rejoin the main stream and move higher.

If I have understood the Commission aright, it proposes a clean break at the secondary and higher secondary stages for those entering upon a course of technical and vocational education and has laid down a fairly long period—the end of the seventh Five-Year Plan—a period of nearly 30 years from now (1967-86)—wherein to reach the required percentage of transfer (20 per cent and 50 per cent respectively) from the general to the vocational courses. And it has to depend on Governmental effort, presumably of a persuasive nature based on inducement and encouragement as well as on educating public opinion, to bring about the fulfilment of the targets laid down. It also hopes that the opportunities for "work experience" provided for the students at all stages of education through handwork and crafts will prepare the students from an early stage of education to develop a more positive attitude towards a technical or vocational career. The efforts of the Government are presumably designed to create a proper climate at the time when the decision has to be made. Within their limits the proposals are sound and practical.

²² Education Commission Report, (1964-66) pp. 202-203.

²³ *Ibid*, pp. 371-72.



The limits are indicated by (i) the rather long period of time during which, thanks to our population growth and the lack of the requisite site drive and capacity, the needs would become still more strident and the general public, faced with a mounting unemployment problem, still more impatient, as well as (ii) by the obvious limitations to a policy of persuasion. It has to be recognised, however, that a democratic system offers no other acceptable alternative, since compulsion is not a normal device of a free society.

But there is another line of criticism which has to be faced. The Commission has rightly considered the need for a "proper articulation between the different stages of education" from the primary to the University stages, and the need for maintaining a certain uniformity of standards. But it does not appear that they have made any attempt to co-ordinate or integrate the general stream of education with the technical or vocational courses ; there is no reference to the level of proficiency in certain basic subjects which a student wishing to join a higher technical school or a polytechnic should have before he can be depended upon to take full advantage, at an effective level, of the courses offered at the latter type of schools. Here also there is a question of standards.²¹ It is to be remembered that students following the general course in school would be brought upon the same curricular diet, a sort of *pot pourri*, that would hardly enable the Admission Committee of a Polytechnic to make a wise selection of the future technical specialists, unless they decide to hold their own admission tests. Perhaps, the boys themselves will develop their aptitudes (with a bit of guidance or counselling) to determine their own course of action. But unless these are matched by significant performance in the chosen fields, the

²¹ The Commission, in chapter VIII of its report, has made certain recommendations for the teaching of science subjects from class V, that is, the higher primary stage. The sciences include physics, geology and biology for class V, physics, chemistry and biology for class VI and the same subjects with the addition of Astronomy in class VII. All these subjects are to be taught on a compulsory basis. From the point of view of creating a bias for technical education, such sciences as mechanics as also a course in applied science as required in day-to-day life may be usefully introduced. It would, no doubt, make the course somewhat heavy. The difficulty can perhaps be met by cutting down the number of the other basic sciences to two in classes V and VI and three in class VII. But the doubt about making all these subjects compulsory remains.

admission of a student to the technical course would be necessarily tentative. One may be excused if one apprehends that, in these circumstances, the wastage that the Commission is at pains to avoid at the secondary stage would recur at the technical or vocational stage, with little chance to the defaulting students to return to the general stream. There need not, perhaps, be an immediate cause for apprehension for during the fairly long period of gestation which the Commission has proposed, the point of no-return to which a student, after joining a technical course, would be committed might be held in abeyance. In the meantime, second thoughts might be necessary to effect a more dynamic relationship between secondary (general) education and technical courses, or for postponing a choice until after class XII.²⁵

(5) *The question of Standards : Mechanization :* The progress as well as the application of technology has posed the familiar problem of man or the machine. The recent organized protest in India against automation is expressive of the workers' misgivings in a country almost deadlocked in its fight against unemployment. What is usually missed is that in this protest, the scales are tilted against the acquiring of new skills, the skills that go into the manufacture of modern up-to-date machines and the skills, engineering and other, required for the operation and servicing of such machinery, leading ultimately to the creation of a modern, technologically advanced, and, therefore, strong nation. But the current opposition seeks to preserve the *status quo*, not merely in respect of the present working force but in favour of a skill-freeze, if such a phrase can be used. For the machine not only does a job, like any human being, but it does the job far more quickly and on a very much larger scale. But the machine requires workers, workers with new skills ; and in the present tempo of human progress, the creation of new skills has no limit.

²⁵ I am wondering if at all, our democratic system notwithstanding, it might be possible to make vocational education, in two stages of 2 years each, compulsory for students in classes IX and X and classes XI and XII in the same way as N.C.C. training was, or Social Service is, sought to be made compulsory for our College students. Of course, even on the academic plane, there would be weighty arguments against such a course. The point is that our aversion to compulsion may, after all, be waived in the national interest.



It is not quite accurate to say that the acquiring of new skills leads to a net unemployment of labour. The construction of a ship, an ocean-going liner, or a jet plane requires thousands of workers all along the line. Even a small, plain wrist-watch, with nearly 100 separate parts requires an army of workers. Would the old country craft, or the sun dial, give more employment? The railways are among the largest employers of labour; and yet can any army of workers be big enough to do the job which a locomotive or an automobile is doing? It is one of the first principles of economics that labour with tools can produce more than labour without tools, that is, capital. Should we engage message boys and disperse with the telephone? Those of our workers who enjoy air-conditioned comfort, sleek type-writers, automatic lifts and so on, would hardly care to go without these labour-saving devices. If there are 20, 30 or 40 of them, they would go by a bus or tramway to attend their office or place of work, rather than engage 10, 15 or 20 rickshaws in order to give employment to an equal number of rickshaw-pullers and be late for office into the bargain, not to speak of saving in transport costs. Even the tramcars are now on the way to extinction. The old gharry-wallas have almost disappeared. There is no doubt that workers are apprehensive of being thrown out of jobs in large numbers if devices like automation which would take over the work now being done by human labour are introduced. Our labour policy, must face up to the human aspect of the problem and ensure that all our current efforts are directed to the expansion of the opportunities for employment within the quickest possible time, not to the introduction of mechanical substitutes for those who are already employed. That no doubt would limit the speed of progress; but the revised slogan, of necessity, appears to be: *hasten slowly*. Mechanical or electronic devices must not be allowed to block employment in a country with a large idle labour force.

Having cleared the way to the understanding of the existing situation, the national effort is now directed to the improvement in the content and purposefulness of the education that the worker receives. The objective is to create well-trained future workers and to make the present workers better workers. That is why, on the one hand, the need is for a well-integrated system of education designed to meet the country's manpower requirements by bringing facilities

for an improved system of technical education close to the employment-seekers of to-morrow, and, on the other, there is the need to provide facilities for the existing working force for improvement of their present skills through in-service or on-the-job training, part-time or sandwich courses, evening classes, continuation schools and so on. All the time, in the back ground, there will be efforts, individual as well as institutional, to create new skills commensurate with the demands of the electronic age. In all these efforts, the importance of maintaining adequate standards—whether it be the standards of performance of the labour force or the quality control of the goods produced or, most important of all, the standards of educational achievement or the technical efficiency of the training given to the workers or apprentices—must be recognised all along the line. Finally, as education proceeds, new skills are created and new values are established ; and a new cost-consciousness will be the fore-runner of the long-awaited break-through for an epoch-making industrial revolution in India.



CHAPTER XVIII

ADULT EDUCATION

I

The Problem

Normally, we divide the stages of education as primary, secondary and higher. A young men taking his M.A. or M.Sc. or M.Com. degree is usually considered to have "finished" his education. So also is the doctor on getting his M.B. or the engineer his degree in engineering. Some of them may go in for doctorates or higher honours but their number naturally being very small, the general idea that education is finished with the M.A., or M.Sc. degree, or such other terminal degrees, is hardly affected by the fact that a few of them may proceed farther to more specialised studies. Not to speak of a University degree, even a boy finishing his secondary school course may be said to have completed his education in so far as his parents may not like him to proceed to a College but would rather want him to start earning and help the family ; or, at best, a decision may be postponed till the boy has "finished" a technical or vocational course. A cultivator in India whose son is attending a primary school may be withdrawn after class IV on similar grounds. In each case, completion of education has reference to a particular stage of education, according to the goal to be reached.

Most of our students who have the means and capacity of continuing their education up to the degree level would not think of going beyond the M.A. or the M.Sc. The degree is considered to be the normal terminal point of one's academic career. A larger view, however, would be to regard education as a non-stop continuing process. Not only should the child be educated, he must also *remain* educated. His education, even when it is confined to the school or the college, would continue even after he has finished his school or college course, if he is not to allow himself to relapse to illiteracy or ignorance or to run to waste the knowledge he has acquired. Those who have not attended any school or college may still have recourse to other means of education. We have come across many such cases of private education. Those who have passed a certain

age when it might be embarrassing and pedagogically unsound to join a school meant for teen-agers, or are unable to engage a tutor or secure private coaching, or in any case are unfit for self-education, are just the ones for whom one might say education has stopped. Yes, it has, in many cases, stopped even before it began.

For this class of people, society has a special responsibility. For those whose education has stopped midway, the normal channels of education may be re-opened in some form or other. Devices like schools for further education, night schools, part-time schools, correspondence courses and the like, under the general label of 'continuing' education, may provide opportunities to such persons to improve their academic standards. But those adults who have had no education at all, and some of whom might be in their 'forties' or 'fifties,' require a special type of education suited to their immediate needs, a type of education that would be tailored to suit their capacity and purpose and with the utmost economy of course-contents. In a democracy, where every citizen is a significant member of society, there is also need for what may be called education for citizenship. The illiterate citizen must, therefore, be supplied with ingredients of fundamental education, the type of education which means something more than learning the three R's and which commonly goes by the name of adult education.

Naturally, such education must be differentiated from continuing education, in-service education, part-time education or the like meant for those who have already received some education and want to have further inexpensive education of a general or special nature. The education of the illiterate adult or of the neo-literate will naturally be of a different kind. This also differentiates the problem of adult education in India, or to speak more generally, in the under-developed countries, where there is large scale illiteracy, in the absolute sense, from that faced by a country, for instance, like the United States of America.¹ The U.S.S.R. among the advanced countries did face the problem of illiteracy, particularly before

¹ In 1957-58, an estimated 35 million adults sought further education through public school programmes, correspondence or extension courses offered by higher institutions, courses conducted on radio and television, on-the-job training, individual instruction or self directed study. Such programmes were supported by Federal, State and local agencies, labour and farm-organisations, public libraries, churches and other organizations.



and immediately after World War II. At the end of the War, the R.S.F.S.R. Ministry of Education reported a "significant number of illiterates and semi-literates" both among the adult population and the youth. Under the fourth Five-Year Plan (1946-50) of the U.S.S.R., persons belonging to the age group (14-50) were urged to join study circles and to accept individual and class instruction by regular school primary grade teachers. It was the duty of those teachers to help teach these people. The Ministries of Education supplied books, note-books and writing materials (except in factory schools where the trade unions were to furnish them). Apart from this, thousands of literate children and adults became the members of a so-called "Cultural Army" and were pressed into "each-one-teach-one" campaign. As the result of these efforts the State now claims that illiteracy has been virtually liquidated. Those that remain are mainly people who are too old for such effort or live in more or less inaccessible or distant places which the educational organisations cannot reach, or people who have a family or tribal background "too stubborn to be easily overcome by new forces."²

In India, in spite of three Five-Year Plans, the situation affecting literacy figures remains as depressing as ever. In fact, India's illiteracy increased during the decade 1951-1961. In spite of unprecedented expansion of primary education, India added 36 million more illiterates during this decade ; in 1966, it was calculated that she had 20 million more illiterates than in 1961. Expressed in percentage, the increase in literacy has been as follows : 16.6 per cent in 1951, 24 per cent in 1961 and 28.6 per cent in 1966. This increase has, however, been less than the rate of growth of India's population. Our main imperative for the liquidation of mass illiteracy is the Constitutional Directive to introduce free and compulsory primary education. At the present rate of the expansion of primary education in this country, even the limited goal of universal primary education up to class VII is not likely to be reached before 2000 A.D. It is understood that during the first 10 years of planning, about 55 lakhs adults only were made literate. During this period the number of literates (in the accepted sense of the term) increased by 0.7 per cent while population increased by 2.15 per cent. At the present

² *Education in the USSR*, p. 96 (U.S. Department of Health, Education & Welfare).

rate of the growth of literacy in India, while the percentage of literacy may increase to about 35 by 1971, the total number of illiterates would exceed the figure of 36 crores by that time. The conquest of illiteracy becomes, under these circumstances, a stupendous task. According to the Education Commission, 67.4 per cent of the age group 15-44—the age group that may be considered to be the working force of the country—are illiterate. In absolute figures, it means that 144 millions of this age group are illiterate. It would not be enough to make this huge number of people satisfy the minimum requirements of literacy. Nevertheless, we have been conducting our literacy campaigns more or less on this basis. Ability to read and write a simple post-card or to sign one's name, under existing circumstances, passes for literacy. It is common experience that such literacy in most cases shows a tendency to relapse to illiteracy. The wide prevalence of illiteracy despite phenomenal expansion of primary education during the past few years can be partly accounted for by the fact that a large proportion of children who have received primary education relapse into illiteracy.

The problem, as it is, looks intractable. When however, it is realised that the goal of free India should not be mere literacy in the narrow sense of the term, but something more abiding, it is only then realised that we actually require for our illiterate brethren not just *literacy*, but *education*. Its aim should be "to prepare man for a social, civic and economic role that goes far beyond the limits of rudimentary literacy training, consisting merely in the teaching of reading and writing". This is the view that was endorsed by the World Conference of Education Ministers on the Eradication of Illiteracy organised by the UNESCO at Teheran in 1965. "Literacy, if it is to be worth while", says the Indian Education Commission, "must be functional. It should enable the literate not only to acquire sufficient mastery over the tools of literacy but also to acquire relevant knowledge which will enable him to pursue his own interests and ends." It, therefore, thought that literacy programmes should have the following essential "ingredients" :

- (1) It must be, as far as possible 'work-based' and aimed at creating attitudes and interests and imparting skills and information which will help a person to do efficiently whatever work he is engaged in.

(2) It must help the illiterate to interest himself in vital national problems and to participate effectively in the social and political life of the country.

(3) It must impart such skills in reading, writing and arithmetic as would enable him, if he so wishes, to continue his education either on his own or through other available avenues of informal education.³

The campaign or the programme for the eradication of illiteracy is thus, in a broad sense, a multi-purpose movement. It would be better if the campaign is carried on in stages. One must be reconciled to the long period of time that a campaign with such broad objectives in view and carried on on a mass scale must necessarily involve.

II

Agencies of Adult Education

Apart from the scale and size of the problem, there are the problems that are to be faced in implementing a scheme of adult education on a mass scale, particularly in a country like India. First of all, there is the question of agency. The adult education movement in India has so far been largely voluntary. Even in the big factories which have a fairly large concentration of labour there is no obligation on the companies concerned to provide for the education, or further education, of the workers. A problem of such dimensions can hardly depend on unorganised voluntary effort to reach a solution within a measurable distance of time. Naturally the proper agency for the fulfilment of the objective of mass education will have to be the Government, or a Government-sponsored authority or local bodies operating on district, sub-divisional or, at the last stage, the village level. The project would require a lot of money and an army of teachers trained in the technique of adult education. This can be provided only with due assistance from the public exchequer. This is another reason why the policy of go-slow has to be an inescapable choice in the present circumstances of India. In the case of voluntary effort, a substantial part of the costs may be saved. It may, for instance, be regarded as a part of social service, which indeed it is, and social workers, particularly those who are interested in such type of work including student

³ Education Commission Report, p. 425.

volunteers, *Sarvodaya* workers and members of other voluntary organisations may willingly and actively participate in such schemes. There is, in other words, great scope for Government-public collaboration in a matter like this, provided that there is a properly drawn up scheme so that organisational and functional co-ordination is achieved and duplication or wastage of efforts avoided.

The Education (Kothari) Commission, however, believes that adult education, because of its "pluralism" and its wide and varied range, should be regarded as a "total governmental function." At the same time, the Commission freely recognises that adult education "is an area ideally suited to voluntary effort and the work to be done is of such dimensions that the mobilisation of this will play a crucial role in the success of our plans."⁴ The general feeling seems to be to set up a specialised machinery on an all-India basis. The Commission refers to the report of the Committee on Plan Projects on Social Education which recommended the establishment of a Central Board of Social Education and to the recommendation of the National Seminar on Adult Education held in Poona in 1965 for the establishment of a National Board of Adult Literacy and Education. This latter proposal is also endorsed by the Commission by recommending that a National Board of Adult Education be established with representatives of "all relevant Ministries and agencies" and charged with advisory, promotional, co-ordinating and review functions. If these measures regarding the agency and institutional set-up as recommended by the Commission are adopted, it would be radically different from the Commission's own view that adult education is a *total* governmental function. In an area which, in the words of the Commission, is "ideally suited to voluntary effort," the role of government must necessarily be confined to certain specific functions, mainly to support the work of voluntary agencies with suitable financial assistance and by providing them with directional and technical skill in fulfilment of the advice of, and the promotional lines recommended by, the National Board of Adult Education; and, needless to add, all the Departments of the Government

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 439.



must agree to adopt suitable measures, falling within their respective jurisdictions, for implementing the different aspects of the scheme.

The Commission further elaborates its view of the "crucial role" of non-official effort in the field of adult education by the clear enunciation that a mass literacy campaign "depends largely upon the voluntary services of all educated people, including government servants, employees in public organizations, lawyers, doctors, engineers and others". It is to be presumed that these "others" include the big employers of labour who command large resources both in the shape of personnel and finance to assure the success of the scheme within their respective areas. In fact, the question of making it a statutory obligation on the part of such employers is a matter to be actively considered : it would certainly be part of the total governmental function. The role of the government in certain other fields may also be indicated. For instance, it should chiefly be the Government's function to activise the All-India Radio and other machinery or media of mass communication (such as educational film strips, documentaries, reading materials as well as television and other audio-visual aids) to assist in securing a larger coverage of adult education and to accelerate its pace. The extension services in the Department of Agriculture, the Community Development Project administration, and the Departments of Public Health and Co-operation will no doubt provide valuable help in the same direction. The Government may also help by the establishment of libraries specially suited for neo-literates which may also be equipped to arrange for refresher courses.

Of the voluntary agencies that may be engaged in this truly nation-building task, the Education Commission has strongly emphasised the role of educational institutions and universities. It has proposed that with the exception of the students in the (lower) primary classes, all other students are to be enlisted in a compulsory national service programme to take part in the education of the adults ; so also will teachers consider it a part of their normal duty either for extra remuneration or relief from normal school work. It would, in the opinion of the Commission, lead to "a signi-

fificant change in the function and outlook of the school.”¹⁰ It is calculated that by working on an average of three hours a day, it would be possible to make a person literate in about 13 to 14 weeks. Students could be organised in batches to spare this time. With the students and teachers participating in adult education programmes, the school would be more and more integrated to community life so that ultimately it might turn out to be something like a “people’s school”. The Commission has also dwelt extensively on the role of the universities in promoting special types of education such as re-education of teachers as well as helping the community build up healthy attitudes towards fundamental national problems relating to public health, sanitation, population control and national solidarity. They can also help raise national taste as well as habits of life and social behaviour of the people. All these, in some form or other, provide education for the adult beyond the limits of literacy. Even in regard to the latter, the universities, the Commission points out, can organise social service camps and “adopt” villages for intensive programmes for development and eradication of illiteracy. One of the most useful forms of social service which the universities are specially qualified to perform are the extension programmes including lectures, field work, demonstrations and cultural and recreational activities. “There is no end to the good,” the Commission asseverates, “which the university can do to the community.”

While due weight must be given to these agencies for propagating adult education, the main desideratum is to create a climate of opinion in support of the campaign and wide-spread popular participation in the same. University students can, during their vacations, act as the spearhead of such campaigns. The All-India Radio network can help ; so can film documentaries and the provision of audio-visual sets, especially in the rural areas as well as in areas where there is a strong concentration of labour. It must be an all-out effort if the drive is to succeed. The feeling on the part of all the workers should be that they are all participating in a basic national work of high priority.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, p. 428.



III

Some Impediments

In an under-developed country, particularly in one of the size of India, certain recognisable impediments hamper the speedy implementation of a programme of adult education, with four out of every five persons utterly illiterate. In a lecture presented before the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Calcutta, in October, 1955, Benoyendranath Banerjee, Director of the Seminar in Adult Education in Asia (with special reference to the work of the United Nations and its specialised agencies), held at Bangsaen in Thailand in the preceding September, drew attention to a report from Indonesia which indicated some of the problems and difficulties that she had to face in organising "a suitably larger scheme of mass education." As the situation delineated in the report bears some relevance to that of India, I make no apology to refer to the following problems of adult education mentioned in the report.*

(i) Great distances combined with insufficient means of communication. The area of Indonesia, for instance, would cover Europe from Iceland to the Caspian border.

(ii) A great lack of power to finance the educational and economic development schemes.

(iii) A great lack of educated professionals and/or volunteers to meet the great demand for education, especially for adult education, with a view to promoting international understanding.

(iv) The people, just having gained their freedom after hard struggle during several decades, especially during the last 10 years, are super-sensitive and super nationalistic, though the latter, on the other hand, is a strong motive-power for development.

In addition to these, it was pointed out, there were problems (faced by certain other countries) of administrative and financial adjustment in federal governments and also the question of subsidies to local authorities and organisations.

These factors are also currently present in India to act as hurdles against her plans for a rapid extension of adult education. The

* *Bulletin of the R. K. M. Institute of Culture, February, 1956.*

vastness of the country and the difficult geographical terrain of some of her inaccessible regions pose problems not only of transport but of overall outlay. According to an UNESCO report, the cost of adult education in Africa worked out to about Rs. 55 per head. On this basis, India would require at least Rs. 80 crores to "educate" her adult illiterates. Nor has adequate attention been paid to the production of necessary skills for adult teaching, or the mass production of teaching aids. As regards finance, the claims of Defence spending and the various developmental investments of a pressing nature have ousted many of our other no less pressing schemes. This, of course, is in sharp contrast to what has been achieved in most other countries. As Shri Banerjee has stated, "ambitious programmes" of adult education have been launched all over Asia ; and he explains how this was done :

"These began with simple reading and writing, but later branched out to the study of health and hygiene, economic conditions, training in citizenship, and recreational subjects. A vast effort has been started to broaden and enrich the lives of countless men and women living in villages, to show them improved methods of craftsmanship, to give them some knowledge of their country's history, geography and social institutions, to inculcate the duties and rights of citizenship and to satisfy their aesthetic and educational need."⁷

This suggests that the concept of adult education would be better served by a pragmatic approach ; it does not postulate a definite "stage" of education with reference to an accepted standard age-group.⁸ At its lowest stage it is a case of simple adult literacy ; at its subsequent stages it takes on the form of what is described in India as "social education." Interspersed, there is some training in craft or in some vocation or occupation, in-service or on-the-job training, schemes of further education, continuation schools etc. The very variety of adult education courses, suited to the requirements of different types of adults, and the fact that its main inspiration as well as sustaining force is the individual motivation of the adult,

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

⁸ The Indian Education Commission fixes the upper age limit at 44 while in U. S. S. R., it is fixed at 49. Generally, a person aged 45 and more loses his capacity of assimilating new learning, if he has to begin from scratch.



add to the difficulties of an effective programming of such education. In India, the most urgent necessity is the liquidation of adult illiteracy. It is to be realised that if the growth of population is not to overtake the growth of literacy, thereby making the problem of the conquest of illiteracy still more intractable, all efforts in that direction must proceed in a gathering tempo of speed and extensity. The Education Commission thinks that a delay of more than 10 or 15 years in liquidating the problem on a mass scale "will defeat its very purpose". In some very backward areas, a 20-year target may be allowed but not more. If, as the Commission thinks, the responsibility of initiating a massive move to combat illiteracy "goes beyond the capacity of the administrative and educational systems" and that it "rests squarely upon the political and social leadership of the country," the extremely hypothetical nature of the targets of time can be clearly perceived.

Fortunately, the U.N. and some of its specialised agencies have already collected a mass of data relating to adult education in different backward areas of the world, particularly of Asia. The United Nations Educational, Social and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Federation of Workers' Educational Associations, the International Co-operative Alliance as well as the World Federation of United Nations Associations (WFUNA) have, between them, collected and edited a vast mass of material or made significant contributions bearing on different aspects of the problem in Asiatic countries. The UNESCO's "Educational Studies and Documents" provide a mine of information. In 1954, this organization held a Seminar at Hillerod in Denmark which was devoted to adult education problems in rural areas. The Indian Education Commission itself has referred to the World Conference of Education Ministers on the Eradication of Illiteracy organised by UNESCO at Teheran in 1965 which was attended by representatives of 75 nations. This Conference regarded literacy "as a way of preparing man for a social, civic and economic role that goes far beyond the limits of rudimentary literacy training, consisting merely in the teaching of reading and writing". In accordance with and in further elaboration of this view, the Education Commission lays down the following three-fold "ingredients" of literacy programmes for the adult, namely, that it should be work-



based so as to make him more efficient, that it should enable him "to participate effectively in the social and political life of the country", and that it would provide him with the necessary basic skills to enable him to continue his education on his own or through other available avenues of informal education.*

The wide perspective in which the UNESCO and its specialised agencies view adult education and the Education's Commission's general agreement with this view has to be translated into practical terms. The difficulty lies in selecting the methods and areas of operation in varying degrees of priority as well as practicability. It would, perhaps, be advisable to put up a cell in the Education Department of each State Government in India as well as in the Union Education Ministry for the due processing, from the viewpoint of priority and practicability, of all the proposals and measures that have been suggested including the very valuable (though somewhat idealistic) recommendations made by the Education Commission. Consideration should be given to the actual steps that have been taken or tried in the other developing areas of the world, and a composite organization on the lines of the projected National Board of Adult Education linked to State Boards with Centre-State, official-non-official, collaboration for co-ordination of the various programmes, may be suggested for the proper execution of the projects. The directional and executive part of the work should naturally be the responsibility of an inter-Departmental machinery at the State level. Finally, these should be associated with non-official advisory bodies, representatives of the major voluntary organizations working in the field, as well as the Universities and other interests concerned. In fact, these latter will be expected to provide the base, or the vanguard, of the entire organisation. The assistance and co-operation of the UNESCO and other specialized agencies may be secured for the production of audio-visual aids as well as model reading material suited to the neo-literates in a bold, simple and telling manner without, of course, appearing childish. The Indian authorities will have to adapt them to the local languages, even dialects, which, by itself, would provide an absorbing task. If such

* Education Commission Report, chap. XVII, p. 425.



efforts, in their wider perspectives, are linked, as they should be, to the advancement of the ideals and objectives of international understanding for which the United Nations stands, they would prove doubly rewarding.

IV

Adult Learning

Turhan Oguzkan, in his introduction to "Adult Education in Turkey"¹⁰ pointed out that it was the adults who hold the power in their hands, make important decisions and guide the fate of the children and that, consequently, it is upon that part of the community that educational efforts should in considerable measure be spent. In fact, he drew attention to the views of educationists like Edward L. Thorndike and Richard Livingstone who had questioned the wisdom of the age-distribution of present-day formal education. Thorndike expressed his view that "a better selection of students and of content and arrangement could be made if teaching were done in adult years, because the abilities, needs and interests of individuals could be better known with each year of their growth and experience."¹¹ Thorndike suggested that a loss of ability due to forgetting, or of time due to re-learning, "could be obviated if knowledge and skill were provided sooner, before the individual had a use of them". Livingstone¹² emphasised the relationship between learning and life experience in such subjects as literature, history, politics and economics and pointed out that the education of the young was necessarily very incomplete even when they were graduates because they had had little knowledge of life. Views such as these highlight the fact that education is a continuous process of achievement and that the maturer years of life are more suitable for education of certain types in so far as they can be interpreted in terms

¹⁰*Educational Studies and Documents* (UNESCO), 1955, XIV, p. 5.

¹¹ See *Adult Learning*, 1928, New York, pp. 190-91.

¹²*On Education*, 1944, New York, p. 33.

not only of a maturer intelligence but of a more meaningful experience of life which a young boy fresh from school, aged 16 plus, proceeding to his first degree, could hardly be expected to possess. Formal learning is only a part, not the whole, of education. Education, in other words, should be treated as a continuous process which should not be allowed to suffer a sharp break at any stage of a man's active life, that is, as long as he is in full possession of his mental and intellectual faculties. We have known of people who had discovered a new interest in life at a fairly advanced age ; or even passed University examinations. Rabindranath took to painting at a late period of his life. May be, we should not talk of geniuses but ordinary men. Not to speak of acquiring fresh interests, even the interests which the latter might have acquired while doing their school course appear to forsake them within a few years of their undergraduate life. This, however, is exactly the outcome of the present system of formal education which adult learning is, among other things, designed to prevent.

Adult learning. I am trying to say, is not the same thing as adult *education*. One can learn from books, or from experience. Education integrates both in a creative relationship. Adult learning in other words, requires the process of learning to be extended beyond the years of adolescence or early youth. It should stretch even beyond the age of, say, 20 or 21, when a student normally takes his first Degree. There are some facts of life which the inexperienced youth of 20 summers can hardly comprehend without a more prolonged acquaintance with them. We remember when we were junior students in the under-graduate classes of our college, we had to read a well-known book in which certain passages had been deleted by the editor presumably as unsuitable for our age. It was one of Shakespeare's dramas and our Professor promptly restored the missing lines in his class lectures after making some oblique, if somewhat unflattering, comments on the puritanic editor. He, perhaps thought that we, in the Degree classes, were sufficiently mature to resent being treated like school children. The fact, however, remains that the fullest appreciation of literature or art requires a maturity of intellect as well as of the senses. Adults are expected to have that advantage.

How exactly the fields of learning would be demarcated if mature people, say, people past their 30's, were to be brought within the scope



of a common continuous educational process has not unfortunately been worked out. One could suggest a large net-work of libraries or even of laboratories which would provide opportunities for further study and work at the adult level. Just as artistes may be provided with common studios set up at State expense or managed by artists' guilds or through other forms of co-operative effort, so also laboratories may be set up for the benefit of those who, after passing out of colleges or universities, wish to pursue the study of the sciences at a further level. We may describe it as a form of "Further Education" or a "Continuing Education." Possibly, an adapted form of "General Education" may also be offered to these learners, particularly if their own schooling had been inadequate. School or college buildings, where available may be utilised for this purpose. The difficulty is that all proposals for General Education that have been discussed in India are intended to form part of the Degree course of our universities.¹² This education is meant to be—at any rate in India—a part of the system of higher education to be offered to a student as he enters a college so as "to make available to the student, and to inspire him to master, wisely selected information as to the facts and principles, so that he will have representative and useful data on which to base his thought, judgment and action". Our objective, from the stand-point of adult education, is to cover a wider field. Various types of courses have been proposed or offered in fulfilment of the objective but the standard of proficiency expected to be attained in these subjects is not designed to make a large draft either on intellect or on mental capacity.

The concept of adult learning and education would, perhaps, in the years to come, receive greater attention at the hands of our educationists than it has so far received. A special aspect of the case is that there is a reluctance in most of the schools and a good few of the colleges to admit elderly women, particularly grown-up married women, into a class meant chiefly for young girls. Perhaps there is an apprehension that the influence of the former type of students would not be all to the good of the young teen-agers. While expressing no views on this particular aspect of young-adult relationship, it is more relevant to argue that herding together adult persons

¹² See Chapter XVI.



who are fairly advanced in age with immature youth in the same class is academically questionable. There is likely to be a substantial difference in the levels of understanding, giving one an unfair advantage over the other. The exact level of teaching to be aimed at by the lecturer taking the class is a matter of debate. Further, the method of teaching is also to be adjusted differently to different age-groups or else there would be pockets of impatience or resentment (depending on the quarters from which it arises) in the class.

This is to say that adult learning in its academic aspect should have a specially framed programme with a fairly elastic schedule of studies that would offer multiple options to the student, suitably graded so as to cater to the needs of different grades of students with varying records of previous performance. preferably, there should be special types of institutions at different levels. The point can hardly be debated in further detail as no experiment in this line seems to have been made except, to some extent, in the shape of 'continuing education.' Thorndike obviously meant something more than this. For the present, correspondence schools may provide a limited answer. These, of course, are meant for literate adults.

v

The Structural Aspect

It has been noted in a preceding section that in view of the huge dimension of the problem of adult education in India, it would not admit of a quick solution, if the democratic process is to be relied on, without imposing too much strain on our financial resources. The cost may be cut if voluntary workers team up with the official agencies. Voluntary organizations can also help in arranging for suitable publicity and in rousing public enthusiasm. The passive contentment of the masses can be broken only by mass action.

Perhaps I do not need any apology if I place before my readers an account of the way in which the Soviet Union set about its task. Conditions in the U.S.S.R. at the time of the October Revolution, 50 years ago, were not very different from the conditions that prevailed in India at the time of our own August Revolution in 1942. But



while the Soviet Union set about its task in right earnest from the very beginning, India is still waiting for a bold formulation of her plans for universal education of which the first plank should naturally be the removal of illiteracy, of the young and the adult alike.

It was on the 14th August, 1930, that a four-year universal and compulsory primary education was introduced in Soviet Russia. In the urban and industrial areas, a 7-year compulsory course was introduced on a universal basis. A unique drive on all fronts, in all areas, even in the relatively inaccessible regions, was organized with tremendous enthusiasm in which workers, collective farmers, intellectuals and others co-operated with singular zeal. As the result of this drive, the percentage of literacy which was 22.3 at the beginning of this century (with 48 out of 71 nationalities having no script of their own) and stood at 62.6 in 1930 recorded an unpreceded rise in the next, few years. In 1939, of all persons between the ages 9 and 49, the percentage of literacy rose to 89.1. In 1959, the census recorded the percentage of literacy among this group as 98.5. To-day the literacy figure has practically reached the full mark (100%). Again, in 1939, 4.3 per cent of the manual workers were educated up to the secondary or higher education standard. The percentage of such workers to-day is 50 ; among the farmers it is 25. In the academic year 1965-66, one out of every three Soviet citizens was attending one type of school or another.

When the Soviet authorities assumed power, it was found that 60 or 70 per cent of the population were illiterate. It was the eighth Congress of the Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik) which adopted in March, 1919, a long-term plan and programme of action of socialist education. The major educational reforms took place in the mid-1930's.¹⁴ To fight this huge problem of illiteracy, schools were separated from the Church and their doors were thrown open to all. For lack of space, even railway wagons were utilised to hold classes. A network of evening schools were set up all over the country for the liquidation of illiteracy and semi-illiteracy. ABC

¹⁴ Some of the material used in this part of the section is taken from "Education in the USSR", U.S. Department of Health, Education & Welfare, Washington, *Bulletin No. 14, 1957.*



primers were prepared which discussed the policies and aims of the new regime in large characters and in easily intelligible language. Those who knew to read and write joined up to teach others. Needless to add, the new teaching included in large part "the political re-education" of the people. So far as adult education was concerned, emphasis was placed on the (adult) evening schools and the workers' faculties. Prior to the educational reforms of 1930's, a preparatory course (*Kursovaya podgotovka*) used to be offered in the regular schools at night for adults who had completed junior secondary education and wished to be admitted, on completion of such education, to a semi-professional course or a higher institution. In the new programme, the adult evening schools of the first level (*shkoly vzroslykh pervoi stupeni*) were designed to give adults the equivalent of at least junior secondary education, and where possible, a full secondary course. The Workers' faculties (*rabsaki*), jointly operated by the economic Commissariats and the higher educational institutions offered day and evening classes of about 4 years, covering the regular primary-secondary programmes.

These adult evening schools, preparatory courses, and workers' faculties have now been superseded, by and large, by other part-time programmes. In keeping with the nation-wide determination to make secondary education available to all, these part-time programmes, meant for employed children, youth and adults are considered to be an integral part of the general (primary-secondary) educational system of U.S.S.R. The programmes are meant to provide opportunity for completion of general education at the 4-year or 10-year level and for meeting the admission requirements of vocational, higher or specialised schools or institutions.¹⁵ Most of these schools are located in large industrial centres. There is a Directorate in each of the Ministries of Education to supervise adult education at the primary-secondary level, including the formal schools for adults and the secondary correspondence schools. This latter type of schools cater to the needs of people over 10 years of age in

¹⁵ Certificates granted at the completion of these part-time programmes were reportedly regarded in the USSR as equivalent to those granted in the regular schools. One should not, however, confuse these schools with the part-time vocational training programmes.



isolated areas. These are also to be found in highly populated areas. There are evening schools for rural youth also. These usually include children and young people of the age 14-25. Classes are ordinarily held during the 6-month slack season in agriculture. They generally meet for 4 hours, 5 times a week. The course materials are the same as in regular schools. In the very nature of the case, these schools do not register the same degree of achievement compared to the schools in the industrial areas. One difficulty is about the course materials. It is difficult to squeeze these within the limits of a 6-month period when the same require more than 9 months in the regular schools. Their financial resources are also comparatively small.

These facts about Soviet methods and programmes may provide a few guide-lines for India's educational planners. Naturally India will have to work within the limits of the democratic system. The problem here is whether an adult education programme can be dovetailed into the scheme of compulsory primary education. Many of the secondary schools hold primary classes in the mornings. Whether these buildings can be used in the evenings for adult students (men or women) may have to be explored. Government and municipal schools as well as buildings meant for other purposes may perhaps be requisitioned for which necessary statutory powers may have to be assumed. Factory owners may be called upon to co-operate if there is sufficient popular pressure. Obviously, these will be able to provide only part-time courses. In the U.S.S.R., there are part-time schools attached to factories which hold classes four times weekly for 4 to 5 hours a day, from 7 p.m. to 11 p.m., or even till 12 midnight ; attendance is compulsory, though a certain amount of tolerance is shown in case of a student missing a day or two as the absence may be due to a tiring day in the factory. In India, it will not, perhaps, be possible to arrange for such long hours of schooling for the workers at the factories in the evenings or at night. It seems that a period of study exceeding 2 hours a day may prove irksome to most Indian workers, having regard to physical or climatic factors. The course contents, in that case will have to be correspondingly adjusted. In any case, it will be impracticable to equate a part-time adult education course to the regular secondary stage. What one would like to suggest is that some sort of a General Edu-

cation course of an appropriate level might be prescribed for the adult learners. Of course it would be somewhat misleading to apply the term General Education to the type of course intended for the working adult whose academic qualifications might be *nil*. What is meant is that a composite course aiming at imparting essential knowledge of a useful character and which will not be pitched at too high a level nor prove too burdensome should be planned for these people. It goes without saying that the course (or courses) should not be too academic, either. The broad objective of the type of education suitable for them and in conformity with its utilitarian basis should be kept in view in framing the syllabus. It is not for this author to suggest a syllabus. It is, however, clear that the course should aim at the literacy of the adult workers in the first instance ; and it then would roughly cover the work done in the first four classes of the secondary course, that is to say, up to the lower primary stage. Being adults, they would possibly not require more than a year to 18 months (according to the time devoted) for completing this course.¹⁶ This will be followed by the composite course suggested above. In addition, the worker may be allowed a number of "options" for a general technical training in a number of subjects relating to his work in the factory. This would be an integral part of the technical education scheme.

Educating the working adults, and for that matter, any concentrated group of adults who can be easily identified, present less difficulty not only in the formulation, but also in the implementation, of a scheme of adult education (including adult illiteracy) than educating the general mass of illiterate adults. The Education Commission describes the former method as the "selective approach" and the latter as the "mass approach." Since our view of education is that it is basically a training in citizenship and it is absolutely essential to educate the general mass of the people in the processes of democracy, a real break-through can only come through universal adult

¹⁶ Literacy succeeds best, the Education Commission observes, when a person learns to use his knowledge to solve his problems through self effort and to profit by the avenue to further knowledge.A well designed follow up plan (continuing education) is an essential part of literacy programmes—*Report*, p. 429.



education. As long as such education depends on voluntary effort or individual motivation, the task remains not only inherently difficult but a time-consuming process. If all who are capable of lending their assistance come forward to participate in this truly national task, the process can be expedited. It will, of course, never really come to a stop but remain a *continuing* process by its very nature. As one generation of adults—and these, in India, run into millions—are educated, another set, in keeping with the growth of population, will come up and take their place. A scheme of adult education for India must naturally be so devised as to serve the three-fold object of (i) educating the existing adults, (ii) preventing their likely relapse to illiteracy and (iii) absorbing their successors into the continuing process. The first and the third would form part of the same campaign, while the second involves provision of follow-up or further education or some suitable form of continuing education. For those who are unable to attend any type of schools, correspondence courses (which require a very high degree of organizational efficiency, hard work and adequate response) provide the answer. Till that is done, an alternative may be found in multiplying and strengthening our existing field service units and other field organizations, at all levels, including the community development organization and the panchayats, and using them not only for the purposes of propaganda (which they will have to undertake in any plan of mass communication) but as an educational medium disseminating a general knowledge of useful subjects with the help of audio-visual appliances and aids. This, incidentally, will educate the people but not necessarily make them literates.

VI

A Programme for West Bengal

A Committee appointed by the Government of West Bengal in June, 1948, "to consider the problem of adult education in West Bengal and to advise Government in regard to the lines in which such education should be promoted, the methods, organisation and



the administrative machinery to be pursued and set up in this connection with a view to ensuring a speedy and effective solution of such problem". The late Atulchandra Gupta was appointed Chairman of the Committee which included the Secretary to the Education Department, and the Director of Public Instruction, Government of West Bengal, leading workers in the field of adult education, distinguished educationists and public men, with Nikhilranjan Roy as Secretary. As the report of the Committee (published in March, 1950) is of more than regional interest, a reference to the views and the recommendations of the Committee will not be out of place. In fact, the report was re-issued under the authority of Chairman Gupta for the general public in the belief that "the report has taken a view of the problems of adult education which may be of interest not only to West Bengal, but to all the States of India, where adult education is at present engaging the attention both of the Government and the public".

If literacy means acquaintance with the three R's, then the figures of literacy given in the Census of India are misleading. The Census test of literacy is ability to write one's own name in the alphabet of any language. This would show that the problem of removal of illiteracy is a much more gigantic problem than the figures of the Census would suggest. The second point, to which attention has been drawn by the Committee is that the expression Adult Education is to be understood in our country at present in a somewhat different sense from that accepted by the progressive countries of the modern world. In these countries, the problem is not the removal of illiteracy but one of devising methods of continuing education for those who have not had the opportunity of proceeding beyond the stage of elementary education. The question there is to provide for "extension" courses or some form or variety of "continuing education" or "further education." Here, in India, the problem is that of removing illiteracy before the adults are enabled to get education from books and printed matters. Taking a hopeful view of the rate of progress of primary education in India over the next twenty years—West Bengal has so far been particularly hesitant in introducing free and compulsory education—the problem of adult education has to be dealt with along the twin channels of making the adults literate and at the same time devising a parallel system of primary education



for them, preferably through a modified form of extension education.

The Committee in making its recommendations has obviously taken the facts mentioned above into consideration. It recommends that adult education should progress in three phases :—

Phase I—To make the illiterate literate, and during the time this is being done, to impart such elementary knowledge as is essential and practicable.

Phase II—To ensure that those made literate do not lapse into illiteracy. This has to be done by arrangements for continuation education which would continue and foster the habit of reading. Under wise organisation this reading can be made both pleasant and educative if the latter phase is not over-emphasised.

Phase III—To organise informative and cultural education with the visual and auditory aids now available, by arranging discourses which will give pleasure and knowledge as also discourses for pure joy ; by fostering folk amusements both on familiar and novel lines.

Of these three phases the Committee considers the first one as "the most important." I would like to add that phase I and phase II should be coordinated so that the efforts spent on phase I are not lost for failure to take timely action (with necessary financial support) under phase II.

(PHASE I)

For the purposes of phase I, the Committee suggested, 'adults' would mean men and women of the age range of 12 to 40. The Committee, however, considered that wherever possible separate teaching arrangements should be made for learners of the age-group 12-18 and of the age-group 18-upwards. The qualifying clause 'wherever possible' is inserted because of the lack of teachers to man parallel centres of teaching. It is also suggested, first, that there should be no co-education, and second, that the tuition time should be different for men and women, that for men being fixed in the evenings and that for women between sometime after midday and before late afternoon. Also, women should be taught by women teachers. As the number of such teachers is limited, the Committee would depend upon women organisations to help in securing teachers

for the adult women education centres. The Committee also suggested the lines on which the administration machinery of adult education should be set up to give effect to the entire scheme of adult education. The Education Directorate should have a separate wing for this purpose. Officers in the district would be required to co-operate whenever necessary with the adult education officers and teachers. In addition to the regular official machinery, the Committee emphasised, local support must be enlisted and regional advisory committees should be set up, with a Provincial Advisory Board to co-ordinate the activities of the local Committees and to advise the Government generally on matters relating to adult education. The Provincial Advisory Board should contain representatives of local committees public opinion and experts in adult education. The Committee, did not think—rightly—that “the scheme of adult literacy and education can be launched and carried on even with moderate success at least in the beginning unless the scheme is worked with the help of men who have worked amongst our villagers and are in touch with them and their lives.” These people alone, the Committee avers, would be able to attract the people and rouse their interest and enthusiasm in literacy and education. As the Committee puts it—

“For it is quite clear that literacy and elementary education of adult illiterates in our villages cannot be undertaken with the least chance of success as a thing apart from the totality of their lives. It has no analogy with the secondary education and the higher general and professional education in our country where the demand is so great that the educational institutions are over-filled no sooner opened and the only problem is to make the education imparted truly efficient. But in the case of adult illiterate villagers their life is undifferentiated. One may regret and say that they are in a low stage of evolution, viz., of undifferentiated homogeneity, or one may rejoice in the idea that their lives are still integrated. But the fact remains that their intellectual education cannot be successfully undertaken unless the teaching and the teacher are in close sympathetic touch with their economic, social and emotional life. This can only happen if the adult literacy and educational schemes are organised and run with the help and guidance of organisations and persons who have worked amongst the villagers, taken part in the sorrows and joys of their lives and have gained their love, respect and confidencethe Governmental machinery of adult education must find out these organisations and persons and wherever possible confer with them, take their advice and invite them to undertake to organise the adult education scheme within such regions of the province where their influence enables them to do so successfully.”¹⁵

¹⁵ In contrast to the West Bengal Committee's preference for non-official organisations in promoting the cause of adult education, the Education Commission (1964-65)

The weakest part of the Committee's recommendations appears to be its proposals in regard to the pay and emoluments of the teachers. According to the Committee, the teachers who should be at least Matriculates or of equivalent qualifications are to be divided into three categories and paid differently, as follows :

- (a) Rs. 25 p.m. for those who are teachers in primary schools
- (b) Rs. 25 p.m. for local part-timers ; and
- (c) Rs. 50 p.m. for those who would come from outside and would work in a centre on a whole-time basis.

It is obvious that the Committee's proposals were framed with an eye to keeping the cost of the scheme down to the minimal level in order that there might not be a predisposition on the part of the authorities to shelve the scheme on the ground of its cost. Whatever the outcome of their recommendations, the pay-scales proposed by the Committee, even though economic conditions were much easier in 1950 than they are now, were, by any reasonable standards, unrealistic. Even if teachers were available under (a) and (b), because of the poor pay of the primary teachers and the large-scale unemployment among them, defections were likely to be large as soon as better alternative avenues of employment became available. As regards (c), how could one expect to secure competent teachers at the ridiculously low pay offered ? After all, it must be remembered that the teachers will have to deal with adults, many of whom are shrewd, experienced persons. The pay-scales offered look particularly discouraging when the Committee itself stipulates that the teachers "must follow only the avocation of teaching and no other avocations".

We now briefly refer to the syllabus of studies recommended.

Test of literacy : The Committee lays down that an illiterate person "should be considered to have become literate when he is able to read books and newspapers in his mother tongue freely and

wants to make adult education "a total Governmental function." By this phrase the Commission means inter-departmental function. Actually, "the pluralism" of adult education and its wide and varied range would be likely to limit the scope of private voluntary effort. On the other hand, such effort could be harnessed for specific purposes to associate the people with a movement which must have a popular base for its success.



with ease, even though he might not fully understand all that he reads, and he should also be able to write what he reads". Reading and writing should be taught simultaneously. Teaching of the language should begin from words and sentences from which the constituent alphabets are to be analysed out. Text-books in Bengali, the Committee points out, for teaching, reading and writing from sentences and words to alphabets are not altogether wanting.

The course in Mathematics should include—

1. Reading and writing of numbers up to 1,00,00,000.
2. The first four rules.
3. The first four compound rules.
4. "Subhankar".
5. Fractions and Decimals (Reading of "Parcha" is to be taught).
6. Keeping Daily Accounts.
7. Practical Everyday Geometry—(a) how to measure and divide angles,
(b) how to draw triangles, squares, rectangles and circles.
8. How to use the indigenous balance.

N.B.—Practical Everyday Geometry may be taken up as a supplementary one for the purpose of continuation education.

The syllabus would also include a number of subjects by way of general knowledge intended to make the learners acquainted with "the present-day world and present-day India." The course which was to be a composite one and knowledge in which was to be imparted orally should comprise the following :

1. Geography including the Earth and its neighbours ; the Wide World (life in different parts of the world ; village life and farming in different countries such as China, U.S.A., Egypt and England ; and life in a big city such as (Calcutta, London, Paris or New York) ; our wonderful country (the great mountains and rivers ; some important cities of India) ; Geography of everyday life i.e., the influence of geographical factors on human life.
2. Civics (Local self-government ; public administration ; the people ; the individual and the State).
3. Elementary Science (Physics, Chemistry, Mechanics and Botany).
4. Hygiene and Sanitation.
5. History (of India) to be told in the form of stories, including the story of India's struggle for freedom and lives of some great men of the modern world.
6. Domestic Science (especially for women learners).

The syllabi in the different subjects were drawn up by knowledgeable members of the Committee. The late Charuchandra Bhattacharya of the Department of Physics, Presidency College, Calcutta, and



a member of the Visva-Bharati, took great pains in bringing out two model handbooks, one on Elementary Scientific knowledge and the other on Hygiene and Sanitation according to the syllabus drawn up by the Committee. These books were specially commended by the Committee.

(PHASE II)

This phase was meant to be a 'continuation' course was intended for those who would complete phase I. This phase was designed not only to keep up the literacy of the adult but also to make it permanent by fostering and encouraging the habit of reading. "General Knowledge," which in phase I was to be imparted orally, was to be "augmented and extended by attracting the new literates to read books" on subjects to which they had already been introduced. The Committee pointed out that there were already available books on many such subjects written in easy and pleasant style and Bengalee authors could be trusted to write good and dependable books on other subjects as soon as a demand developed for the same. The Committee was not in favour of the Government itself undertaking to write (that is, with the help of Government officials) and publish such books as "such books have a tendency to become frigid and formal, without attracting literacy grace". What the Government could do, the Committee suggested, was to bring out cheaper editions of good and interesting books, at least at the beginning when the demand was likely to be small. In order to make the books easily available and accessible to the learners in phase II, the Committee suggested that a library of recommended books should be built up at each adult education centre which would function both as a reading and circulating (lending) library. These libraries should also subscribe to newspapers and magazines.¹⁶

¹⁶ While on this subject, it is necessary to point out that the language of most of our newspapers—even those with 'mass circulation'—is of the 'literary' type, with a profusion of Sanskritised words. The same remark applies to the language of the news broadcasts from the All-India Radio. Even in the special sessions of the A.I.R. meant for the mazdurs or for rural people, many of the items are put over the air using words, phrases or idioms totally unfamiliar to those for whom they are intended. With the emergence in increasingly large numbers of the neo-literates, serious thought should be given to the language policy of our newspapers and radio broadcasts.



(PHASE III)

The final stage (phase III) of adult education should be, in the words of the Committee, "cultural and informative education with modern visual and auditory aids". The Committee would like to see organised sports and amusements, familiar and novel, songs and plays and "jatras" which are meant to bring joy "to the hard and drab lives of our villagers".

While phase II of the Committee's scheme necessarily follows phase I, it considers that a substantial part of phase III should be taken up along with and as a part of phase I. To be successful, the Committee clarifies, the programme of literacy and knowledge in phase I should not be imparted as "colourless matter-of-fact school curriculum, but in an atmosphere of cultural and emotional appeal". The visual and auditory aid for the purpose should be such as could be easily handled by the teachers. In particular, "magic lanterns" and gramophones should be (as they could be) the principal instrumental aids which should be supplied to all adult education centres.

Finally, the Committee makes it clear that though, in a sense, the measures suggested by it might be described as 'continuation' of that aspect of phase III which is recommended to be taken up along with phase I, they are not exclusively, or even principally, meant for those who have been made literate and have been educated at the adult education centres. They are measures for the dissemination of knowledge among people in general. As such, these measures, the Committee suggests, should not be treated as a part of the adult education scheme proper but should be undertaken by some other department, with more sophisticated aids ; and the expenditure on the same should not, for the same reason, be charged on the adult education centres.

The concluding words of the Committee are worth quoting :

"The aim of education of adult illiterates is to educate their minds intellectually with knowledge, and emotionally with culture.Political education, indispensable for good citizenship, would form part of such education, but only a part. Men should be made men first, before they can become good citizens."

Very right. We may add that a good man is also a good citizen, for a good citizen works for peace, prosperity and progress. A good deal of



the ills from which the family of nation suffers and which to-day pose a constant threat to the peace of the world are due to want of proper education, not mere want of literacy. Adult education is undoubtedly a factor for world peace. It has thus not merely national significance but world significance no less. There is a "Food for Peace" campaign, internationally organized. The hungry areas of the world have the potentiality of a high explosive. There is clamour for food for the body ; for, if man dies, who or what lives ? The same remarks apply to the areas of ignorance. They want food for the mind : an equally powerful issue calling for international co-operation to meet the challenge.

VII

Education for Peace

To-day, it is the UNESCO's ideal "to construct the defence of peace in the minds of men through education, science and culture". This was repeated by (Lady) La-iad Pibulsonggram, President of the World Federation of United Nations Associations, at the WFUNA Seminar on Adult Education in Asia, held in 1955. She declaimed : "Here in Asia lives one half of the entire population of the earth, here in Asia we see every single problem, which UNESCO was created to solve, in its clearest and most acute form. The need for scientific and technical education to keep pace with the rapid progress of the modern world, the fight against illiteracy, disease and poverty, and the removal of social tension, so that men of different races and creeds may learn to live together in peace and amity—all these problems are of immediate interest to most of the countries here represented." India has to fall in line if she has to save her people—500 millions of them—from the darkness of spirit that has descended on them. Here is a country with so much potentiality for good : a country which, through centuries, had cultivated and propagated the arts of peace. To-day we find here a large-scale mental inertia. With mounting illiteracy and resulting ignorance, the country continues to yield to superstitious beliefs, to the dark forces of evil. Foreign rule has ceased, but the effects, the evil spell, still linger on. Divisive forces still divide the mass of Indian society. They have mislaid their spiritual anchorage.



And so their mind falls an easy victim to catchwords and false propaganda and very often mistakes tinsel for gold. There is an imperfect understanding of events, of the history that is beating on the shores of their mind. People with such a type of mind lacks the main defences against obscurantism of all sorts and a true sense of citizenship. These lack the strength to wield the weapons of peace.

To-day India faces the threat of aggression, both external and internal. Both are continuing threats. To think over it : Problems of casteism, communalism, regionalism, orthodoxy, and obscurantism —these are the vicious products of a dark period of Indian history throughout which generations of the Indian people, men, women and children, had been kept out of the reach of education. Indian disunity which frequently had tempted foreign Powers to seek their fortunes in this rich but helpless land has been sedulously fostered by the agents of those powers and by the forces of reaction. These have to be fought relentlessly and without respite till the end. The birth of a free nation is only the beginning of the process. Its sequel is in the hands of the nation's educators.



CHAPTER XIX

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS

I

Quantity versus Quality

The question of educational standards assumes special importance in the case of a nation trying to catch up with the progressive countries of the world. The fixation of the attainable targets of development in such a country will necessarily depend, not merely on the availability of the material resources required for development, whether in sight or in prospect, but also on its human resources, quantitative as well as qualitative. The urgency of attending to this question derives from the generally low standards of educational achievement in the developing countries. The difficulties are enormous. Quality and quantity, these are not always reconcilable terms. Very often, one has to be achieved at the cost of the other. Then there is the need for the expansion as well as diversification of educational opportunities. This again is in line with the requirements of national development. A large variety of technological skills are necessary for maintaining the lines of production at a high level. Manpower management will fail if the educational system is slow in turning out in adequate number trained personnel of the requisite calibre. Here, again, comes the question of reconciling quantity with quality, one of the most difficult problems to be solved by a nation emerging from very backward conditions into the competitive world of the modern age.

In India, our educators are facing this challenge. How backward the country was, even after nearly two centuries of British rule, is now too well-known to need recapitulation. India has, no doubt, freely acknowledged the debt she owes to English education in spite of the general anti-people effect of the then Government's educational policy. But she also owed her widespread illiteracy and backwardness of education to British rule. A reference to the position as it was in or about 1947, the year in which India got inde-

pendence, will go to support this view. In that year, the number of children within the age-group 6-11 attending school was barely 30 per cent. Only 58 per cent. of the teachers in primary schools were trained. The percentage of literacy was only 14.6 per cent. in 1941. Again, on March 31, 1948, the number of primary schools in Part A states (roughly including the provinces of British India) was 140,000 while that of secondary schools (middle and high) was a little over 12,500 in those States. Only about 2.5 million students were receiving education in the secondary schools of all types, middle, secondary and higher secondary, in 1948. The total direct expenditure on secondary education was Rs. 13.50 crores. In the field of higher education, in 1947, there were 21 universities in all India and the number receiving higher education was less than 2,25,000 (the number of graduates from Part A States being 27,000). The total enrolment at the collegiate level was only 46,000 in that year. The expenditure on Universities and other institutions of higher education (excluding technical education) was Rs. 7.62 crores in 1948. There were many linguistic areas which had no Universities of their own. Finally, in 1947-48, India produced only about 900 graduates in engineering and 300 in technology. Many, if not most, of these achievements were the results of private efforts which had to contend against many difficulties. The indubitable fact remains, however, that the results were poor, both in quantity and quality.

Since independence, the position has, no doubt, improved. The percentage of literacy as well as enrolment in the elementary schools has registered a significant increase during the last two decades. In 1941, the percentage of literacy, as already stated, was 14.6. In 1951 it was 16.6, in 1961 it was 24 while in 1966, it was 28.6 per cent. In spite of this percentage increase, the number of illiterates in India increased by 36 million during the ten years 1951-61 and by 50 million during the five years 1961-66. Again, while in 1947, children belonging to the age-group 6-11 attending school was barely 30 per cent., there was a substantial increase during the next fifteen years. The following percentage figures, distributed according to age-groups, will show the extent of the increase.

TABLE¹

Age-group	Percentage of age-group attending school			
	(1951)	(1961)	(1951)	(1961)
6-7	34.47	47.34
7-8	37.06	54.51
8-9	36.34	51.19
9-10	32.46	46.08
10-11	28.41	39.53

Here, again, if the figures in absolute number are taken, they will further reveal the depressing fact that even now a large chunk of children of school-going age are not attending schools, as shown in the following table. :

TABLE

Age-group	Total No. of children in the age-group		No. of children not in school	
	(1951)	(1961)	(1951)	(1961)
6-7	..	9,310,800	10,836,100	6,101,256
7-8	..	9,100,200	10,596,000	5,727,868
8-9	..	8,892,200	10,347,900	5,561,083
9-10	..	8,686,600	10,115,800	5,867,083
10-11	..	8,483,100	9,875,700	6,073,433
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	44,472,900	51,771,500	29,430,723	27,003,990

It will be seen that in 1951 nearly 30 million children, and in 1961 as many as 27 million children, of the age-group 6-11 were *not attending schools* in India. If the age-group 6-14 is taken into consideration, the total number of children *not attending schools* was 49,178,907 in 1951 and 47,940,116 in 1961. The figures are colossal. These children are yet to be covered by the Constitutional Directive contained in Article 45 of our Constitution.

At the secondary stage (classes VIII to XII), the figures of growth are no less impressive. The Education Commission (1964-66) points out that during the 16 years 1950-51 to 1965-66, enrolments in classes

¹ This table and the following one are compiled from *The Indian Year Book of Education*, 1964.

VIII to X were nearly quadrupled whereas the enrolments in the higher secondary classes during the same period increased five times. Further, it is anticipated that during the next 20 years, the pressure on enrolment will further increase due to opening of high schools in rural areas, improvement of general economic conditions and the demand of all sections of society for the further spread of post-elementary education. In 1965-66, 1.4 million were enrolled in the higher secondary classes and 6.1 million were enrolled in the lower secondary classes.² This means that in that year only 7 per cent. of the age-group concerned were enrolled in the higher secondary classes and 19.1 per cent. of the age-group concerned in the lower secondary classes. In 1950-51, the percentage figures were 1.9 and had been 9.3 respectively.

As regards higher education, details of its development in India have been given in Chapter XV. Under British rule, there were, by the end of the nineteenth century, only five Universities including the Lahore University. By 1947, the number of Universities rose to nineteen. In 1963-64, there were 61 universities (at present 64) and 9 institutions "deemed to be universities" under section 3 of the University Grants Commission Act of 1956. In 1950-51, the number of affiliated Colleges (Arts and Science) stood at 498 and of Professional and Technical Colleges at 208. The figures increased to 1,139 and 962 respectively in 1961-62. In 1950-51, the figure of enrolment in higher education stood at 4,03,519 ; it increased by two-and-a-half times to 10,36,109 in 1961-62. According to the latest figures at hand (1965-66) the total number of under-graduate students in India was 759,000 (191,000 in 1950-51) and of post-graduate students 86,000 (18,000 in 1950-51). The number of students in the professional courses increased from 54,000 in 1950-51 to 2,49,000 in 1965-66. If those who are receiving higher education are placed within the age-group 18-23, the percentage of such students to the total number of persons falling within that age-group was only 0.7 in 1950-51 and 2.1 per cent. in 1964-65. In the former year the State was spending Rs. 17.68 crores only as direct expenditure on higher

² Report of the Education Commission (1964-66), p. 166.

education (including professional and technical education) while in 1961-62 it rose to Rs. 62.06 crores.

We need not go farther to find support for the general conclusion that, faced with India's poor performance in the sphere of education under the British regime, the National Government is doing its best, in spite of the various kinds of limitation under which it works, to improve the performance of all branches of the educational system, primary, secondary and higher ; but the efforts still are, in relation to current needs, quite inadequate. There have been no dearth of schemes for improving our educational performance. The Radhakrishnan Commission, the Mudaliar Commission, the Sargent Report and the Kothari Commission have all worked towards this end. So also have the U.G.C. in its own sphere of action. The Kothari Commission has also given us projections of what such efforts, particularly its own recommendations, would mean twenty years hence. If the actual performance is to come anywhere near its expectations, it would require a gigantic, almost super-human, effort and mobilisation of resources at every level. Thus, while the Commission rightly says that it is difficult to be precise about these matters, its expectation is that India "should broadly work towards increasing the educational expenditure *per capita*, in a period of 20 years, to between 4 and 5 times the present level of Rs. 12 (at constant prices)". This, in turn, would depend upon the economic growth (of between 5 to 7 per cent. per annum), growth of population (1.5 to 2.5 per cent.), and the proportion of national income devoted to educational expenditure during this period (4 to 6 per cent.). It is assumed that in 1986, the national income would rise to Rs. 673,000 million (as against Rs. 210,000 million in 1965-66), the estimated population to 748 million (495 million in 1965-66) and total expenditure on education to Rs. 4,036 crores (as against Rs. 603 crores in 1965-66). At these figures, the percentage of total educational expenditure to national income would be 6 (as against 2.9 in 1965-66). With 1965-66 as the base year, the index of growth would be 446 in 1985-86.³

³ *Ibid.*, p. 473. The following growth rates have been assumed : National Income—5 p.c. per annum ; population 21 per cent. per annum ; proportion of national income devoted to expenditure on education—6 per cent.

These figures highlight the educational conundrum of today. On the one hand, this country has to settle a heavy load of arrear accounts so as to clear the backlog of educational deficiency which, in immediate prospect, requires a large and rapid increase in the number of educational institutions of all types as well as of student enrolment. On the other hand, the question has been posed as to whether this would not involve the inevitable sacrifice of quality. Also, a too rapid expansion may result in heavy wastage or stagnation. Now, so far as primary education is concerned, there is the compulsion of a Constitutional Directive. Progress shall have to be rapid if all children of the age-group 6-14 have to be covered by a network of elementary schools and a nationwide drive for enrolment. Since, however, education is a common, continuous process, the quality of the products coming from the primary schools to join the secondary classes will determine the limits within which the secondary education system, on its part, may react to the need for improvement. Even the children joining the primary school would be better served if they came *via* a pre-primary school. Improvements that can be suggested in the field of primary education have been discussed in chapter X of this book. The Education Commission speaks of "enrichment of curricula" and rightly emphasises the "crucial" necessity of the improvement in the quality of primary teachers. So far as the secondary education system is concerned, though there is no element of compulsion as there is in the case of primary education (up to age 14), the "explosion" of enrolment that has already taken place makes the question of qualitative improvement (of secondary education) a concurrent problem along with that of its expansion. As the Education Commission observes : "even at the present rates of expansion (of secondary education), standards have deteriorated because enrolments have outstripped available facilities like teachers or equipments. Besides, there has been a large increase in unemployment among the matriculates. If the present trends continue, this deterioration in standards will be accentuated and educated unemployment would be extremely serious."⁴

* *Ibid*, p. 166.



Forbodings, like this, nevertheless, seem somewhat incongruous when we are reminded that only 19 per cent of children of the relevant school-going age are at present enrolled. The Education Commission itself has proposed to increase this percentage to 46 in 1985-86. In absolute figures it would mean that more than 24 million boys and girls would be expected to attend school in 1985-86 as compared to 6 million in 1965-66. In 1950-51, the corresponding figure was only 1.5 million.

So far as the University stage of education is concerned, the question of quantity *versus* quality is agitating the highest academic circles in India as also elsewhere. Reference has already been made to the Robbins Report on Higher Education in England (1961-63). The question was raised in the context of the recommendation of the Robbins Committee that 28 new Universities (in addition to the 32 already existing) be established in Britain so as to meet the possible " demand for places " from an estimated 560,000 coming up for enrolment in the Universities of the United Kingdom in 1980-81 as against the present intake of 260,000 only. In the U.S.A., there is a definite school of thought which would not mind a little bit of dilution of University standards so as to make higher education available to the increasing number of young Americans wanting to go up to the University stage to complete their education but cannot due to the present limited scope of such opportunities. In India, we have noticed how since independence, she is going ahead with the establishment of new colleges and universities so that during the twenty years since independence, the number of universities has more than trebled. In a country with scarce resources, a university with its necessarily expensive set-up cannot function without a substantial assistance from the public exchequer. There are also problems of finding an adequate number of competent teachers of the requisite standing to man the faculties of these new universities. In the case of Science faculties, the problem of foreign exchange to finance the import of modern and sophisticated instruments, apparatus and other equipment for study and research also causes an additional headache. There is also the question of suitable pay-scales to attract the right type of teachers. Under the circumstances, it is quite natural for the University Grants Commission to utter a note of warning,



particularly as its own funds for disbursement to the universities under various schemes are necessarily limited^s.

II

Deterioration in Standards

There is hardly any institution that makes for a nation's progress, whether considered individually or as part of a system, which does not stand in need of constant improvement. In fact, the idea of progress is implicit in the idea of improvement. Improvement should not, however, be confused with mere development. A college or university may develop in size. Its enrolment may grow. It may have a large number of faculties. And yet all these may coexist with a deterioration in standards. It may be the result of an "open" admission policy followed by a college or university whereby indifferent, ill-equipped students may swarm its corridors and create problems of discipline, or the university may open departments without proper planning of resources or making sure about the availability of the requisite qualified staff. Even at present, there are colleges, not to speak of universities, in which classes cannot be held for want of qualified teachers. In many cases, teachers have to be appointed with inferior qualifications. Such men may be found even holding University chairs. The creation of a new university, in other words, imposes certain obligations on the founders which, if not fulfilled, will merely help to bring University education as a whole into disrepute.

While a university (or college) cannot afford to be less than what it should be by accepted standards, institutions belonging to the lower levels in the existing pattern of education are equally expected to show a corresponding zeal to maintain standards of performance and discipline. In fact, the more we move down the

^s Section 12 of the U.G.C. Act (1966) authorised the Commission to allocate and disburse grants to Central and State Universities for development or for any other general or specific purpose.

scale, the more we should satisfy ourselves about its innate strength. No lasting structure can go up on weak or treacherous foundations. Therefore, every effort that strengthens the foundation or otherwise improves it is worth while. There is another reason. More and more students in future, after completing their school education, will, through force of circumstances, be compelled to join the working force or leave the main stream of general education to join technical or occupational schools. In fact, having regard to the traditional attraction of the average Indian for liberal education, in particular the craze for collegiate or university education, which for a large majority of students in the upper classes of the secondary schools becomes the goal of their educational efforts) and in view of the fact that this has vastly aggravated the problem of 'educated unemployment,' this diversion to employment-oriented education and the partial transformation of the secondary education itself to achieve this purpose is not an undesirable development. But this means also that a student who is thus preparing to enter life or to join a technical or vocational line should expect of his school to provide him with a certain standard of initial equipment by way of knowledge and skill which would help him to enter upon his new assignment with confidence. The main reason, however, of strengthening the system of secondary education is the fact that it feeds the institutions of higher education (including technological education), and deterioration in quality at the secondary stage is bound to be reflected in a corresponding set-back at the higher level.

These are the general considerations emphasising the necessity of maintaining adequate standards at the different stages of education, beginning with the school. As the Education Commission has pointed out, there is no uniformity in the structural pattern and duration of secondary education in the different States of India. The recommendations of the Mudaliar Commission on Secondary Education have not been accepted by all States. This has been due to the fact that Education being a State subject, States have been free to follow their own policies. There are States, like the U.P., which have 10-class schools followed by the two-year intermediate course in a college. There are others, like West Bengal, where there are two parallel sets of schools one the older type 10-class schools and the other consisting of the 11-class schools, the



former being followed by a one-year "pre-university" course before the students are allowed to join the Three-year Degree course. It would be helpful, perhaps, if we take up West Bengal's case by way of illustrating the difficulties experienced by the people in working out the new scheme of education.

The proposed object behind the concept of the 11-class schools was to provide a district, terminal stage of education. It was to be terminal in the sense that students, on completing the course, say, at the age of 17 or 18, would have a self-sufficient education so as to be able to start earning their own livelihood. The idea of the "streams," further, was to prepare the students for a more intensive training in specialised technical or vocational schools corresponding to the streams chosen by the students. It was thus intended to be a compromise between the old-type liberal education and the new idea of giving a vocational bias to such education so that it could be used as a terminal point for at least 50 per cent of the students, enabling the latter to proceed to higher technical or vocational schools or set up as independent craftsman and earn a livelihood ; the rest might join a college or university. It was also the intention to improve the quality of secondary education by adding one more year to the 10-year period obtaining previously. Actually, what happened was that only about half the number of the 10-class schools could be upgraded to the 11-class standard. Even then it became a terribly expensive affair in so far as the State had to depend on its own resources for financing the process of conversion. The result was that the process of conversion had to stop midway. There were other difficulties. Though the pay and emoluments of teachers in secondary schools were improved, there was a dearth of competent teachers to teach the upper classes of the 11-class schools in which the curriculum more or less conformed to the old intermediate classes in the colleges. Many of the schools had to manage by borrowing teachers from the colleges on a part-time basis particularly for the science and technical streams. That was an undoubtedly unsatisfactory arrangement. There was also a dearth of equipment and facilities. Due to restriction on imports and the lack of resources, many schools could not secure the necessary scientific apparatus for the teaching of experimental sciences in the higher secondary classes. The extended syllabus of the Higher Secondary course could not,

because of these deficiencies, fulfil its object with the result that to the average student it appeared to be heavy and stiff. It was also a point of criticism that the higher secondary course level was not properly adjusted to that of the degree course with the inevitable overlapping of course-contents ; nor was it adjusted to the 10-class school final course. Recently, changes in the School Final Syllabus have been made in West Bengal to effect a proper integration of the two courses at class IX level, but not before some damage had been done to the status of these schools. The value of the School Final examination has also suffered because the better-class boys naturally prefer the higher secondary schools.

Some of these deficiencies may be likened to the teething troubles of a baby. While this may be conceded, some of the fundamental features of the new scheme, or rather the manner of our efforts to go over to the new scheme, have been troubling the public mind. The continuance of the School Final Examination and its necessary corollary, the 10-class schools, is causing a good deal of worry to educationists. This examination admits private candidates—the Higher Secondary examination does not—and their large-scale failure reveals a huge wastage in spite of the fact that they had to come through a school test. Nor are the regular students sent up by these schools in a particularly happy position. The performance of these two sets of candidates at the School Final examinations held by the West Bengal Board of Secondary Education for the last few years will bear out this point. Taking examinations for 1965-67 for comparison, we find that the percentage of pass at each of the examinations has been very unsatisfactory as the following figures will show :

School Final Examination (West Bengal Board)

(Percentage of pass)

			1965	1966	1967
Over-all	..	..	34.93	31	37.4
Regular	..	..	48.5	50.14	62.2
Private	..	..	12.4	14.41	23.6

In absolute figures, the number of candidates who appeared at these examinations and of those who passed are given below for each of these three years :

School Final Examination (West Bengal Board)
(Number appeared and passed)

	1965	1966	1967
Total No. of candidates actually appeared	36,832	63,202	87,065
Total No. of candidates passed*	12,868	19,587	32,166
Percentage of pass	34.93	31	37.4

(*Inclusive of private candidates)

As regards the *quality* of the performance of the students, the picture is equally depressing. In 1965, out of a total of 36,832 candidates who took the school final examination only 298 got first division which works out 0.8 per cent. In 1966, the figures respectively were 63,202 and 384 (0.6 per cent) and in 1967 the figures were 87,065 and 657 (0.75 per cent). Among the regular candidates, the number of first divisioners for the three years (1965-67) were, respectively, 282 (out of a total of 22,970), 365 (out of 29,334) and 637 (out of 30,077) the percentages being 1.2, 1.2 and 2.1 respectively. These figures exclude those candidates who had failed in previous years and who appeared on the 1964 syllabus. The over-all percentage of pass of these candidates was 26.88 in 1965 and 29.6 in 1966. The *number* of first divisioners was 3 and 5 respectively.

Coming now to the Higher Secondary examination in West Bengal the following figures give the percentage of pass for the four years 1964-1967 classified according to the streams :

Higher Secondary Examination, 1964-67 (W. B. Board)
Percentage of pass

Streams		1964	1965	1966	1967
Humanities	..	50.3	62.8	56.0	55.0
Science	..	64.3	70.1	66.5	66.9
Technical	..	67.9	75.1	61.0	61.0
Commerce	..	66.1	64.4	60.0	46.1
Agriculture	..	71.9	75.2	55.36	39.2
Fine Arts	..	39.2	28.3	70.73	45.2
Home Science	..	57.0	54.8	56.85	49.2



The over-all percentage of pass was : 1964—57.2 ; 1965-66 and 1966—60.15. Though the results of the Higher Secondary examination in terms of percentage were, for reasons already stated, somewhat better than those of the School Final examination, they do not indicate any progressive improvement of standards over these four years to any appreciable extent.

Another conclusion that emerges from the study of the results of the Higher Secondary examination is that the Science and the Technical streams have consistently shown better results than the Humanities stream, in terms of the percentage of pass. Again, comparing the Humanities and the Science streams, the better results of the Science stream candidates are shown not only by the substantially higher percentage of pass but also by the number of first divisioners, as shown in the following table :

Higher Secondary Examination, 1965-67 (W. B. Board)
(Humanities)

		1965	1966	1967
Total number of candidates actually appeared		27,782	23,294*	27,425*
Total passed		17,423	14,427*	16,442*
Passed in Division I		224	221	224

(Science)

Total number of candidates actually appeared		17,543	18,798*	22,480*
Total passed		12,510	13,095*	15,739*
Passed in Division I		2,309	2,248	2,859

(*Excluding External candidates)

The figures relating to the First Divisioners may, however, be interpreted to mean that the comparatively better class of students take the Science stream. This is further proved by the fact that in the Three-Year Degree course also, the maximum pressure is on admission to the first-year B.Sc. classes in colleges. Third Divisioners and those who fail to get seats in the science classes are obliged to take up the Arts course. This is another reason why standards are further depressed in the teaching of Humanities. Finally, it is on record that women students do better than their male counterparts in the Humanities stream of Higher Secondary examination.

In 1967, the number of women students who took this examination was almost half of the number of men students ; yet they had 141 first-divisioners compared to 83 male students. Their percentage of pass was also higher than that of male candidates. In 1966, also, the performance of female candidates was better than that of the males. Out of 6,887 female candidates who actually sat for the examination (as compared to 16,407 male candidates) there were 134 girl first-divisioners as against 87 boys. The percentage of pass was also higher. In 1968, all the first ten places in Humanities went to girl candidates, only 2 boys sharing 2 places with the girls. One reason for this is possibly the fact that women students are less exposed to outside distractions than male students and are, by and large, more easily amenable to discipline both at home and in college. But an equally valid reason is that a larger proportion of good women students are attracted towards courses in Humanities than men students because of the natural preference of the former for such courses and also because facilities for taking up a science course are even now extremely limited for women students. The relatively better performance of women at the University examination in Arts subjects including Honours courses is also a proof of the higher quality of their enrolment.

So far as the performance of students in general depends on the maintenance of adequate standards in schools and colleges, it is necessary that careful attention should be given to this aspect of the question. We have so far attempted a study of the question with reference to examination results. There will always be good students and not-so-good, or even bad, students. The purpose of proper standards of education is to make the bad good and the good better. For want of a suitable alternative means of measurement, the percentage of pass at the examinations is commonly regarded as a fair index of the collective performance of the students. But one need not rely too much on this method of assessment. Until examinations are so conducted as to be a real test of merit, this method of evaluation of the performance of the examinees will always be open to grave errors, if not abuse.* However, there is some truth in the view that the standard

* See chapter XXI.



of questions set in an examination paper also sets the standard of teaching in colleges. One of the most hotly debated features of the educational system in India is that it is too much examination-oriented, and the dubious value that society places on a mere "pass" at the examination. It is at the root of much of the indisciplined behaviour of students in the examination halls. Some sort of an unwritten law seems to be in vogue that "stiff" questions, or questions which are "above standard" should be scrupulously avoided, while "strictness" is discouraged in the evaluation of answer-scripts. "Grace" marks are frequently allowed by Boards of Examiners for artificially bolstering up the percentage of pass, or else, the Board or the University concerned is likely to be hauled over the coals for "general massacre" of the innocents. On the other side of the shield are the idiosyncracies of individual paper-setters, moderators, examiners. It is not unoften that questions are set without due regard to the course-contents. The paper-setter is often not sure what exactly he is expecting of the examinees when he sets the questions. Does he want to test their memory? Comprehension? analytical powers? critical judgment? accuracy of facts? And, then, there is at the back of the paper-setter's mind those ugly scenes of broken chairs and tables, torn answer-scripts, twisted electric fans, scared invigilators and the like which occurred in the past when the examinees in a body went on the rampage on the alleged grounds that questions were stiff, out-of-syllabus, above standard, ambiguous and so on.* Naturally, paper-setters take the easy path which ultimately tumble down standards.

This is another way of stating that standards of education depend largely on standards of examination. It is a sign of the times that this question—the reform of the entire examination system—is now being widely debated in the country, and that not merely in academic circles. There are two other aspects of the question which have

* According to experts, every question paper should be related to such objectives as "recall of knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation". U.G.C. Committee on Standards of University Education, 1965).

* It is interesting to observe that the U.G.C. Committee on Standards (1965) records the opinion that "the generally prevailing idea that lectures should 'cover' the syllabus must be given up."

been raised by educationists. One is the insistence on a degree as an indispensable condition of employment (even for filling up subordinate posts). This should go. Employers should be free to hold their own tests in accordance with their own needs. A certain minimum academic achievement, say, not beyond the high school level, may be sufficient in most cases. A degree may be required in those cases, for example, in filling teaching posts, or posts requiring high technical competence, or where a degree has to be an essential condition. This, incidentally, would lessen the pressure on admission to the degree courses and restrict it to those who are, so to say, academically minded. It would check the over-crowding of classes, make seminars and tutorials effective instruments of education instead of the make-believe that they are at present, at any rate in the big colleges with 2,000 (or even more) students on the rolls. The second aspect of the question is : does the right to education necessarily mean the right to a degree ? Society has no doubt the duty to educate its citizens. It does not mean that it has the duty of making every citizen a Doctor of Philosophy or a Doctor of Science, or even an M.A. or M.Sc. All that the Constitution of India contains is a directive that free and compulsory education should be given to all children within the age-group 6-14. Whether a student should proceed to a college after finishing his school will depend upon whether he satisfies the requirements of admission to a particular course. If a high standard of achievement is expected, a correspondingly high initial qualification may be demanded of candidates seeking admission. For it must be understood that access to higher education requires a qualitative approach. It is, in brief, a privilege, not a right.

Apart from the unhealthy influence at present exercised by examinations on educational standards, there are other factors which deserve mention. One of the contributory causes of the present low standard of education is that the majority of the teachers are dissatisfied with their inferior social status, their poor scales of pay and emoluments, their heavy load of work. They are disgruntled. They complain that there is little recognition of merit ; on the contrary, merit is often superseded by extra-academic pulls. The school system does not encourage a spirit of initiative or experimentation in the teachers. The managing committees are often packed with the nominees of



the ruling coterie and many of the members may not be even remotely connected with education. Sometimes local political bosses exercise an unwholesome influence on school management and even interfere in its day to day affairs. Some of the teachers themselves turn politicians. Finally, most of the schools have to work under rules and regulations that leave little freedom to the teachers to try out new ideas or techniques ; instead they take it easy and play safe.

A well devised scheme of teacher-education, on the other hand, may provide a much-needed corrective for stereo-typed methods of teaching. A well-equipped school with a body of properly trained teachers devoted to their high calling is the best guarantee for the maintenance of educationally sound standards. It is certainly not our case to advertise every trained teacher as a paragon of efficiency. There is some truth in the statement that teachers are born, not made. Still, teaching has now developed its own techniques and methods in line with modern thinking and these are designed to help a teacher to approach his subject with greater understanding, confidence and efficiency. The difficulty is that most of the teacher-training institutions in our country are somewhat isolated from the main stream of the academic life of the universities. The quality of the training programmes needs also to be improved which, as the Education Commission has put it, should include re-orientation of subject-knowledge, vitalisation of professional studies, improvement in methods of teaching and evaluation, development of special courses and programmes as well as revision and improvement of curricula. Even such trained teachers as we have are, at least in a great many schools, too few in number to make any impact on teaching efficiency in general. In West Bengal, for instance, in 1965-66, the percentage of trained teachers in the secondary schools was 35.6. Of the teachers in the upper primary classes, the percentage of trained teachers was a mere 16.3. Out of 16 States of India, the percentage of trained teachers in as many as ten States was less than 70 ; in four, on the other hand, it was less than 30. Taking the secondary schools of India as a whole, more than 70 per cent of the teachers in the age-group 21-35 were untrained. There has since been some improvement. The great tragedy is that most of the trained teachers, because of the unfavourable circumstances in which they have to work, soon lose their zest and become, instead, listless and apathetic. One is hardly justified

in looking for an improvement of standards in such a situation. Actually, with the exception of a few schools, there has been a continuing deterioration in standards. One added reason for this is the commercial scale on which teachers are obliged to undertake private coaching work. It is no wonder they are listless, apathetic, or tired when they go to take their classes in school. Some of them are also engaged as hack writers to work for publishers. What with writing, what with making rounds of schools and bookshops to push sales, what with canvassing heads of institutions or senior subject-teachers for introducing their books, the teachers gradually become commercially minded and lose their sense of vocation.

These are the portents of a decadent age. A bad teacher is an enemy of society. When bad teachers are matched by bad students, what emerges is the certainty of disaster. The tragedy is that just as the educational system attracts a large number of unqualified or indifferent students because they have nothing else to do, so also there are teachers who are not only academically incompetent but have no heart in their work. The question, how to effect a change, has not yet been satisfactorily answered.

III

Standards in Higher Education

Higher education includes both collegiate and university (post-graduate) education. In India, 85 per cent of the students engaged in higher education are enrolled in the affiliated colleges, while teachers employed in colleges constitute, according to an U.G.C. estimate, 83 per cent of the total number of teachers including those in the universities. These figures show, according to the U.G.C. Committee on Standards of University Education (1965) that "Standards cannot be improved without raising the quality of collegiate education".

There is no question that the University Grants Commission has been trying hard to bring about an improvement in collegiate and university education according to its own lights. This is indeed a tough job. The total student enrolment in colleges and universities now exceeds 15 lakhs. The number of colleges is in the neighbourhood of 2,500, while the number of universities (1965-66) is 64. The total number of teachers (including tutors and demonstrators) in



colleges and universities was 68,634 in 1963-64. The staff-student ratio in the Colleges worked out to 1 : 17.7 and that in the universities 1 : 14.9. These average figures are, of course, deceptive for while there are colleges which, as we shall see have a very poor enrolment both in number and quality, there are others, the "mammoth" ones, which are, as it were, bursting at the seams, with too many students and too few staff. The very magnitude of the figures shows the toughness of the job before the University Grants Commission which, under the law, is required "to raise the levels of university education ; firstly, to the highest standards obtaining in our own country and, secondly, to raise the best attainable in our country to international standards." The aim is unexceptionable but the resources necessary to achieve the aim have yet to be found. The U.G.C. itself admits that the assistance so far made available for providing facilities for affiliated colleges "has not been adequate".

One major impediment in the way of improving collegiate education is the existence of poorly equipped, poorly staffed colleges. The U.G.C. Committee referred to above draws attention to the fact that "Colleges are allowed to be set up these days under the influence of political pressure, regional rivalry, parochial sentiments etc." ; also, that many colleges in India "do not have adequate enrolment with the result they cannot be considered viable economic and intellectual units". According to a survey made by the U.G.C. in 1963-64, out of 1707 affiliated colleges which furnished the relevant information, as many as 282 colleges had an enrolment of less than 100 and 714 colleges had an enrolment of between 100 and 500. At the other extreme, as many as 46 colleges reported an enrolment of 2,000 students and above.* It is evident that colleges with too few students, however ideally desirable, cannot be expected to fulfil the functions of higher education effectively without heavy subventions, whether from public or private funds. Adequate standards either of teaching or of equipment cannot be maintained on such a slender base. At the other end, with enrolment exceeding 2,000, colleges tend to become unwieldy, methods of study mechanical, with very little scope for real contact teacher-student.

* U.G.C. Annual Report (1963-64) p. 18. Madras is recently reported to have decided to establish 40 new colleges during the fourth Plan period to provide for the increasingly large number of students coming out of secondary schools.

With the failure of the college authorities to provide for adequate amenities for such a large number of students, the question of standards is liable to be put into cold storage.

While the question of viability, economic and intellectual, is posed in the case of very small colleges, there is no doubt that a college with an enrolment of, say 500 or 600 students can be an ideal college, under certain conditions, provided, of course, it has the necessary funds and foresight to meet the recurring liability that such a college must necessarily face. With such resources, it can run a few selected departments or follow a few well-organised lines of specialisation and enforce fairly high standards of admission and achievement. But the proviso—availability of adequate resources—is the deterrent and decisive factor. As regards colleges with enrolments of 2,000 students and above, while there is some truth in the observation that such colleges become unwieldy in which standards cannot be maintained or that in such colleges there is a perpetual state of indiscipline among the students based on a growing alienation of the student body, it is possible to argue that here again, if the colleges are well-endowed and well-staffed, if the buildings are commodious and the campus well laid-out, a large enrolment need not be a cause of concern at all. The trouble is that most of the "mammoth" colleges had, or have, no such redeeming features. One such college in Calcutta had over 16,000 students studying in eight shifts in three separate buildings scattered over different parts of the city. One of the buildings was originally meant for a school which still functions during the day while the College classes are held in the mornings and evenings. There were, in 1958-59, six other mammoth colleges in Calcutta which, between them, catered for 53,830 students out of a total student enrolment of 71,500 in all Calcutta colleges. That was the year in which the U.G.C. scheme of the phased reduction of the roll-strength of the big colleges came into effect.¹⁰ The scheme aimed at the phased reduction of the roll-strength of these big colleges over a period of 5 years (later extended by one year) so as to avoid a sudden dislocation as well as the reconstitution of these colleges working in shifts into independent units with a ceiling on the roll-strength specifically worked out

¹⁰ See Report of the Phillips Committee, U.G.C., paragraph 16.



for each such unit by a special U.G.C. (Phillips) Committee. It was certainly a well-intentioned and bold attempt to create conditions for the improvement of standards of education in the colleges. It also cost the U.G.C. a lot of money—the burden was later on taken over by the State Government—to meet the deficit in the college finances due to the introduction of the phased reduction scheme. But for certain reasons, neither the scheme of phased reduction nor the new Three-Year Degree Course introduced at the same time succeeded in achieving the basic aims.

Let us be more specific : has the Three-Year Degree Course resulted in an improvement of the performance of the students at the University examinations ? Of course, examinations can only be an approximation as a guide to standard. The various deficiencies of the examination system based mainly on the essay-type of questions are now under active consideration. In fact, recent events in Calcutta and elsewhere have put a big question mark against the sanctity and effectiveness of University examinations. Therefore, if we compare the results of some of the University examinations held after the introduction of the Three-Year Degree Course, we have to do it in the full knowledge that they might have been worse.

Taking again the Calcutta University as our field of enquiry, the following table gives the percentage of pass at the different university examinations during 1962-65 :

*Percentage of pass at P.U., B.A./B.Sc./B.Com. Part I, Examination (1962-65)
(Calcutta University)*

		1962	1963	1964	1965
Pre-University (Arts)	..	50.1	45.6	53.3	49.0
Do. (Science)	..	42.1	48.0	42.3	45.3
B.A. Part I	..	37.8	39.9	48.5	50.5
B.Sc. Part I	..	58.1	49.7	53.2	34.6
B.Com. Part I	..	58.1	49.7	53.2	37.3

These results do not justify an optimistic estimate of the achievements of the Three-Year Degree Course. The failure of 50 per cent of the examinees running into thousands continue to be a cause of serious concern. To a certain extent, perhaps, the poor results are

a reflection of a general mental and moral set-back that had affected the World-War II generation of young people. The results of the examinations held in the years previous to 1962 were still more unsatisfactory. The examinees concerned also had passed their childhood in the unsettling conditions of the War. Many of them passed with the help of "grace" marks. The following table shows, by way of contrast, the percentage of pass at the I.A., I.Sc., B.A. and B.Sc. Examinations (old 2-year course) of the Calcutta University during the five years 1957-61 :

*Percentage of pass at I.A./I.Sc./B.A./B.Sc. Examination, 1957-61
(Calcutta University)*

	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961
Intermediate (Arts) Examination	43.8	47	40.7	36.0	40.8
Do. (Science)	47.5	40.8	50.4	45.4	41.2
B.A. Examination	40.0	44.6	40.4	30.0	42.8
B.Sc. Examination	42.8	44.6	50.0	44.0	44.4

It is, of course, to be admitted that the results of the various examinations under the new system compare slightly favourably with those under the old system of a two-year Intermediate and a two-year First-Degree course. The difference, is really one between *Tweedledum* and *Tweedledee*. For instance, in the Pre-University examination in Science, the percentages of pass over the years (1962-65) are actually a little worse than those in the old I.Sc. Examination. The explanation is also simple. A one-year Collegiate course immediately after the School Final Examination puts the examinee at a disadvantage compared to one who has had two years of college life and teaching. For the same reason the higher secondary examination which comes after a three-year schooling (classes IX to XI) and with a stricter enforcement of routine and discipline than is possible in a college shows considerably better results than the old intermediate examinations. For a similar reason, the results at the B.A. Part I Examination and those at the old B.A. or B.Sc. Examinations are more or less of the same pattern because both the examinations come after a two-year course. The results of the Part II Examinations are more satisfactory because examinees take it on a much shorter syllabus particularly as the indifferent students



have been weeded out at the Part I Examination. These are, of course, tentative conclusions. The main question, whether there has been an improvement in the standard of student performance after the introduction of the Three-Year Degree course, other things remaining the same, cannot but be answered in a hesitant negative. The phrase, other things remaining the same, requires consideration.

The Three-Year Degree Course was framed on the postulate of a total educational period of 14 years. This three-year course is preceded by a higher secondary course of 11 years or a secondary (high school) course of 10 years followed by a one-year "pre-university" course. The futility of this one-year pre-university course which is practically limited to a working time of about five months of the academic session is now admitted on all hands. We have already dwelt on the poor standard of a majority of the ten-class schools. The one-year (actually 5-month) pre-university course which follows only makes matters worse. The only saving grace of the P.U. course is that it accustoms the young boys and girls fresh from the high school to a few months of college life and to the methods of teaching followed in colleges before they enter upon the more mature set-up of the Three-Year Degree Course including an eight-paper Honours course. Apart from this advantage, neither the 10-year school nor the P.U. course helps to improve educational standards. On the other hand, students coming from the higher secondary schools face a real difficulty with regard to the medium of instruction. Throughout the whole of the school course, primary, secondary and higher secondary, teaching is done through the medium of the mother tongue or the regional language, while higher teaching mostly uses the medium of English. For Honours teaching, it is as yet the recognised medium. Unless, therefore, the standard of English teaching is considerably improved at the school level, there is likely to be a deterioration of standards at the degree level. This, I suspect, is the reason why there is an appreciable drop in the percentage of pass from the secondary and the higher secondary examinations to the degree examinations. The situation may, however, improve with the adoption of the regional language as the medium of instruction up to the University (including post-graduate) stage. But would it? It would, I am afraid, create more problems than it would solve. This important question is discussed in a subsequent chapter.



Reference will shortly be made to the recommendations of the U.G.C. Committee on Standards of University Education (1965) for the improvement of educational standards. There is, however, one aspect of the Three-Year Degree Course—the teaching of Honours subjects—which requires special attention. The Honours syllabus in most of the subjects has been upgraded. This was necessary. The Review Committees will no doubt be helpful in removing difficulties in the way of maintaining the required standards. It may perhaps be still more useful if the Universities and their relevant Boards constitute Standing Syllabus Committees to keep the syllabi in different subjects up to date and at the proper level. Any move to dilute the standards will be ultimately harmful to the interests of higher education and research. For this purpose, properly qualified teaching personnel with necessary specialisation in the different fields have to be employed with suitable scales of pay. In the University of Calcutta, this aspect of the question is being overlooked by many of its affiliated colleges. Each Honours subject is now composed of 8 papers instead of 6 as previously. To teach a subject of 8 papers, the ideal arrangement is to entrust the teaching of one full paper (of 100 marks) to one teacher only, particularly if he has to take the pass course and/or pre-university students also. The reason is that each Honours paper covers a specialised field and requires assiduous preparation for doing adequate justice to it. The University of Calcutta, in order to satisfy the minimum academic requirements, has prescribed a staff of at least four teachers for every department teaching up to the Honours standard. Most colleges, however, have failed to implement even this modest requirement. They carry on with three teachers only in their Honours Departments, the same they used to have for the six-paper subjects in the two-year course. Whatever the reasons or circumstances that have forced them to do so, there is no doubt that the only sequel to this would be a definitely lower standard of Honours teaching. Since only the better class of students are allowed the privilege of taking up an Honours course, and that after passing a selection test, the large failures at the examination can be attributable to the lower standard of Honours teaching and to the fact that the over-burdened teacher cannot be expected to do justice even to his own area of specialisation.

*Recommendations of the U.G.C. Committee (1965)*

The U.G.C. Committee on "Standards of University Education" which reported in 1965 covers a broad canvas. It discusses such questions as the aims of university education, evaluation of standards, admission of students, courses of study, undergraduates education, post-graduate studies and research, science education, teaching techniques, medium of instruction, examination reforms, administration and financial requirements of universities etc. In addition to appointing this Committee, the U.G.C. itself has taken some significant steps for the improvement of educational standards. Of these, the most important step has been to appoint a number of "Review Committees" consisting of experts to examine the existing syllabi and facilities for teaching and research in various subjects of study and to make suggestions for their improvement and modernisation in order to raise the general level of academic attainment in the universities. The subjects already dealt with are Mathematics, Bio-chemistry, Chemistry, Botany, English, Social Work, Education and Library Science. Some of the main recommendations of these Committees have been summarised in the Annual Report of the U.G.C. and are briefly reproduced below :

- (i) Recognition should be given to sessional tests in assessing the ability of students, and dependence on one comprehensive annual examination at the end of the course should be reduced. 40 per cent. of the total marks may be allotted to sessional tests.
- (ii) Symposia and summer schools may be organised for discussion of teaching methods and the system of examination, and for the promotion of research.
- (iii) There should be a compulsory *viva voce* examination for the Ph.D. degree.
- (iv) Candidates for the Ph.D. degree should attend and conduct seminars and also teach for a minimum period of one year in the university department.
- (v) Active research centres in the universities should receive appropriate grants for development.
- (vi) The teacher-pupil ratio should be improved and there should be suitable provision for administrative assistance to heads of departments.
- (vii) More time should be available for field and experimental work.
- (viii) Public grants should be provided by the Commission without matching basis. Research bulletins and journals ought to be published regularly.

The Committee on Standards has also endeavoured to set suitable guide-lines which might in future help the Review Committees in

making specific recommendations in their respective fields and also help the Universities to have a better perspective of their own obligations in this respect. The Standards Committee, in fact, has covered about all aspects of university education in making their recommendations. A brief reference to some of their main recommendations will be illustrative of the new thinking on the subject.

In the section dealing with the evaluation of standards, the Committee, for a variety of reasons, is not ready to commit itself to the view that there has been a deterioration in standards over the last 10 or 15 years. It is, however, aware of the current view that standards "have declined from the point of view of examination results as also with reference to the expectations entertained by employing agencies and the general public". With this somewhat ambivalent estimate of an undoubtedly disturbing situation, the Committee finds that (i) the courses of study in many universities "are not related to well-defined educational objectives" ; (ii) that the conditions under which teaching and learning are carried on "are also far from congenial" ; and (iii) that the average product of an Indian university "does not compare favourably with his counterpart in some of the well-known universities in the world." The Committee also draws attention to the fact that "current practices lead to a great many students who are neither emotionally nor intellectually prepared for higher education, entering the Universities." It, therefore, supports the view that there should be "a careful selection of students" for admission to colleges and universities. For those who are not selected, there should be alternative training programmes ; also, for those who are admitted, there should be provision for changing over from Honours to Pass courses or *vice versa* according to their aptitude and ability. An important recommendation is that those who seek admission to a University should have "adequate grounding" in certain "core subjects" such as science, mathematics, history and geography, apart from languages. "Universities", the Committee further adds, "should demand a fairly high standard of English for entrants".

On the question of the courses of study, the Committee once again, without committing itself to, or identifying itself with, any particular view, refers to the "general impression" that in most Universities, "no serious attempt is made to evaluate syllabuses



in the light of modern developments", and then, proceeds to give the reasons why courses of study "have not been rationalised and modernised in our universities." The reasons are: the cumbersome nature of the procedure of revising the syllabus, lack of competent teachers as well as of equipment or physical amenities necessary for carrying out reforms. The Committee, in this context, commends to the notice of the universities the reports of the U.G.C. Review Committees and suggests that the universities themselves might appoint their own Review Committees. The U.G.C. would like to have standing Review Committees for "continual study of university courses in the light of modern developments in the respective fields." Other recommendations suggest a regular programme of seminars and conferences of teachers in different subjects and year-round refresher courses and seminars "to which teachers may be exposed for short periods in groups". While discussing the courses of study, the Committee expresses the view that "*it does not seem possible to have a 12-year school education except in exceptionally good schools*" and thinks that the pattern of education in which a 10-year school education is followed by 2 years in an intermediate or junior college and 3 years in a degree college "deserves serious consideration". At the same time, the Committee feels that the existing Pre-University course should be reorganised "keeping in view the capacity of the students as also the need for giving them an adequate grounding for higher studies", and proposes that special attention should be directed to the teaching of English in the pre-university course.

Regarding post-graduate study and research, the Committee expresses its satisfaction that "by and large, results at the post-graduate level are qualitatively as well as quantitatively superior to those at the undergraduate level". After pointing out that post-graduate colleges should be allowed to come into existence only if they fulfil "requisite stringent conditions", it suggests that the proper method of developing post-graduate education in the colleges is to organise it in places where at least 3 to 4 good colleges may pool their resources in equipment and teaching personnel. An innovation which the Committee suggests is the institution of an M.A./M.Sc. Research Degree, especially in the languages, as a sort of "an inter-



mediary (?) degree " in order that standards of the Ph.D. may be maintained at a high level. These suggestions are well worth consideration.

The Committee, while satisfied that science education in India " has grown fairly rapidly during the past four or five decades " and that the proportion of science students to total enrolment in the Indian universities " compares favourably with a large number of countries ", finds that the resources available to the universities for the development of science departments " have not been commensurate with their requirements considering the great need for improving standards of science education in the country". In fact, the improvement of the standards of science teaching should begin at the school level and that " first-rate teachers " should teach science at the school level (but what about emoluments ?). This recommendation appears to be related to the view, expressed by the Committee, that students with scientific potentialities should be identified sufficiently early and " given special attention and care ". Selection of such students for Science courses at the universities should also be careful ; proper regard should be paid to their mathematical ability and capacity to do practical laboratory work. Requisite facilities by way of laboratories, equipment etc. should be provided to enable universities to introduce modern techniques in teaching science. Students should be encouraged to improvise their own apparatus as well as methods of their own for greater skill and insight into practical work. Finally, information about scientific careers should be disseminated widely among young people.

The importance of the teacher's role in maintaining adequate standards of teaching has been more than once emphasised. The U.G.C. Committee now points out that very little attempt is made in Indian universities " to involve the students in the learning process through direct contact with the mind of the teacher ". The importance of tutorials, seminars and other forms of " academic discussions " including group discussions of an inter-disciplinary nature is emphasised. Students should be given written assignments and encouraged to make use of the library, select books and read for themselves. More promising students should be selected and given special facilities. Conditions have to be created for attracting and retaining well-qualified people in the teaching profession. Their salaries



should be comparable to those in the National Laboratories, Institutes of Technology, etc. Also, the existing gap in the salaries of teachers in the affiliated colleges and of those in the universities should be "narrowed". To encourage study and research, teachers may be allowed 'sabbatical leave' in connection with professional work. It is also suggested that so far as recruitment of teachers in affiliated colleges is concerned, one or two experts from Universities should be taken into the Selection Committees. Further, teaching aids like radio, television, teaching machines, films, tape-recorders, etc. can be used with great advantage by Indian universities and colleges.

Adverting to the question of the medium of instruction, the U.G.C. Committee points out that "*unless an Indian language has grown up to its full academic stature, it would be unwise to introduce it as the medium of instruction at the university stage*". Further, if a change-over is to be brought about, universities must satisfy themselves about the competence of teachers to teach in the language concerned and about the availability of sufficient numbers of good books. It must be ensured that students do not suffer from such change-over. More specifically, the Committee, speaking of English, makes the interesting suggestion that experimental studies may be undertaken concerning the relative performance of students who study through the English medium and others. It is frequently noticed that the best students elect English as their medium and that their standards also are higher. Even in the case of a change-over to a regional language, it would be, according to the Committee, necessary to provide for imparting adequate knowledge of English and that its teaching "should begin sufficiently early at the school". Summer schools and refresher courses should be organised on a large scale for teachers of English.

Finally, the Committee makes a number of suggestions for examination reform. It endorses the view that the present system of examinations "lacks sufficient reliability and validity" and would rely upon Dr. Taylor's methods of computing the marks obtained by the candidates at an examination by reducing them to a common scale.¹¹ If there is provision for internal assessment, the tendency of the

¹¹ See H. J. Taylor : *Three Studies in Examination Techniques* (U.G.C.).

colleges to raise the value, say, of the sessional work of students, can be checked by scaling the marks obtained to the same mean and standard deviation of each college. There are also other methods of correcting the existing defects and deficiencies of the examination system.¹²

Finally, the Committee has paid a good deal of attention to the question of the organization of the universities as well as to the role of the U.G.C.—that of providing, in the words of the Committee, “effective leadership to the universities in the sphere of standards.” At present, the Commission is hampered because of the lack of resources. The outlay on higher education as well as the cost per student has to be sufficiently increased so that sub-standard institutions can make an effort to rise above their present low levels. A strict control, it is suggested, should be exercised by the Union Government on the establishment of new universities by the State Governments.

These, in brief, are the recommendations of the U.G.C. Committee on Standards of University education. It will be seen even from this brief review that the concept of a standard cannot be confined to a single aspect or field of the educational system. It permeates its every aspect : teaching, syllabus, examination standards, admission of students, diversification of curricular programmes as well as of the educational system as a whole, library and laboratory facilities, the medium of instruction and so on. Emphasis is, however, to be placed principally on (*i*) teachers and (*ii*) the system of examinations : the former because the success or failure of any academic experiment depends ultimately on the teacher and his methods ; the latter, because, at any rate in India, the system of examinations —beginning with the questions to be set and ending with the particular form of final evaluation—sets the tone and standard of teaching. It is for this reason that so much attention is being paid to the question of teacher status, teacher training and, in particular, his pay and allowances which will not only keep him above want but also fulfil his needs as a teacher ; and to the examination system including the question of objectives, the form of the examination, the system

¹² This subject is discussed in detail in Chapter XXI.



of evaluation and the like. The medium of instruction is another question that has assumed a great importance from the point of view of standards. Unfortunately, some of the controversial issues have been complicated by political overtones. In fact, one of the most disturbing features of the present educational scene is the extent to which different schools of political thinking have tried to dictate educational policy in our country. It is sufficient to point out to all concerned that the power of the purse through which the Government seeks to control the Universities is as much a sacred trust on behalf of the nation as the future of the younger generation.



CHAPTER XX

CO-EDUCATION

1

What is Co-education ?

At first sight, the question, what is co-education, seems to be naive. The fact is that the term is used in different senses. Simply stated, any institution that admits both boys and girls to study together is described as co-educational. Strictly speaking, however, this may not be quite accurate. Actually there are some schools which, though they admit both boys and girls, enforce some degree of segregation between them in respect of curriculum, hours of work, activity programmes, use of building and the like. Some, if not most, schools impose several kinds of restrictions on the free mixing of the sexes. In others, separate common rooms, or even separate benches in the same class-room, may be allocated exclusively for girls. In some schools, again, the staff may consist entirely of males (as for instance, when Colleges originally meant for men students subsequently open their doors to women students) or entirely of females (as when a girls' secondary school allows boys up to a certain age to be admitted to the junior classes say, up to standard IV or V) or of both males and females. Now, it is evident that these different kinds of schools show a distinct gradation, starting from the single-sex school at one end, and, the completely co-educational school at the other end of the scale.

What, then, is the completely co-educational school ? In all the types of schools mentioned above, the "co-" aspect is not fully realised because all of them impose some kind of limitation or other on the boys and the girls which does not make them completely equal. In other words, a fully co-educational school will be based on the complete absence of any discrimination whatever, on the ground only of sex, between one student and another, so that all the facilities of joint school-life are equally available to all the students



subject to the rules and regulations of the school, which also must be equally applicable to them irrespective of sex. This means that the boys and the girls would enjoy a common status as students : no one should have any special status or enjoy any special privileges because of his or her sex. They would sit in the class rooms together, learn their lessons from the same teacher (whether male or female), and participate on equal terms in all campus activities.

Now, let us analyse the different kinds of institutions and see how far they measure up to this ideal :

First, there is the case where, in the same campus, there may be two institutions, one for the girls and the other for boys with different staffs, but under the same management.

Secondly, there may be separate institutions for boys and girls but housed in the same building, with a common staff, or with a large proportion of the staffs being common to both, and under the same management, with the same head for both the institutions or with different heads. Generally, these institutions function at different times of the day. Some of them may provide for some joint classes, however.

Thirdly, there may be one single institution open to both boys and girls, having common class, but with separate seating arrangements for girls, with no other joint interests or activities, except the common instruction given by the same teaching staff. In the library also, in such institutions, special seats are reserved for girl students.

Fourthly, there are institutions which are primarily meant for boys admitting a certain number of girls, or *vice versa*, where the boys, or the girls, as the case may be, would be in a permanent minority. They have a staff usually belonging to the same sex. In some of these institutions, girls (or boys) are admitted up to a certain standard after which they must seek transfer. Having regard to the small number of students belonging to the minority sex, the institutions are not in a position to offer special amenities for such students or to attend to their special wants or requirements. Their share in the activity programmes of the institutions is, for the same reason, negligible.

It would be clear from this short description that the first category is professedly not co-educational. The only co-educational feature

of such institutions is that they are not fully segregated and so cannot be regarded as a segregated school either. The second category is practically two institutions in one, though, being housed in the same building, with a common teaching staff, they are closer to each other than their counterparts in the first category. Co-educationists call them "dual" institutions because their duality is more pronounced than their "co-" aspect. The third category which is generally regarded as co-educational is in reality "Co-instructional" because under this system the boys and the girls retain their separate character arising out of sex-differentiation. The fourth and last category would also, in popular estimate, be regarded as co-educational but is yet not fully so because, due to the limitation imposed on the number of students belonging to the other (minority) sex, they cannot function on equal terms with the rest of the student community and do not fully share the advantages of a common school life. Very often they develop a feeling of inferiority and become self-conscious. Generally speaking, the latter two categories of schools may be classed as "mixed schools."

Since none of these categories of institutions appear to be fully co-educational, they evidently belong to the successive points of the co-educational scale starting, at one end, with the single-sex school proper. (The term "single-sex" school, is more appropriate than the term "segregated" school, because in the United States of America, the term "segregated" has a different connotation—it usually bears a reference to the colour bar). The points of the scale as they progress towards the other end give us an indication of the definition of the co-educational school proper, the completely co-educational school.

The definition, which I commend is the one given by L.B. Pekin, namely, that

"Co-education means, at the very least, the instruction and training of the two sexes in the same school, in the same classes, and mostly in the same courses of study, throughout the years of growth."¹

The qualifying phrase, *at the very least*, is to be noted. For co-educations represent a spirit, a faith, just as those who oppose it should

¹ L. B. Pekin : *Co-education* (1939), p. 189.



be convincing in their opposition, in theory as well as in practice, and show that they themselves believe, with equal passion, in segregation. Very often, however, we find people who are willing to strike but afraid to wound. The middle-of-the-roaders are just those people with whom the co-educators proper or the opponents of the idea have little or no patience. As an instance, this is what Pekin has to say in elaboration of his definition :

" . . . beyond this (the definition given above) it is important to what extent men and women are mixed on the teaching staff, and to what extent the children really share the same life, not only in class but in all the normal social activities of the school. There are "co-educational" schools where the two sexes may not be seen walking to and from school together, on penalty of punishment. There is one boarding school where a girl may not go alone with a boy for a Saturday or Sunday afternoon walk—the expedition is considered respectable only if at least two boys and two girls are present. Fortunately, intelligent children can easily work out the simple mathematical problem involved if they want to achieve solitary couples, and in practice the foursome splits in half as soon as it is out of sight of the school buildings. As a chaperoning device, this method is the failure that it deserves to be : as a piece of training in the right relationship between the sexes, it is mischievous in the extreme. At another school, the buildings for boys and girls respectively are quite separate : the two sexes catch sight of each other round corners, and may even get to know each other through their families ; but they are never allowed to meet informally as equals. At yet another "Co-educational" school, a short while ago, mixed bathing was an excitement reserved for one day a year—and what an excitement it must have been ! If there is anything more foolish than this fear of the sexes meeting in a human way, it is the practice of one school, which until lately enforced their meeting at mealtimes, by requiring them to sit boy and girl alternately : the system simply became, as an ex-pupil put it, a vast flirting machine."²

If the point of this tirade is that in co-education, you must either go the whole hog or give up the pretence, well, the experiences of certain countries as well as certain institutions are not, unfortunately for the co-educators, in favour of unrestricted mixing of the sexes, as and when they please, just because they are in the co-educational schools, on the supposed ground that as they are educated together from their early childhood "throughout the years of growth" the demands of Nature would be fully sublimated through the educative process. Living together in society is made possible through the

² L. B. Pekin, *op. cit.* pp. 189-90.



recognition of certain norms of conduct and the combined weight of social displeasure is the mechanism through which these norms are maintained. At the back of it is the legal system to deal with culpable cases of deviance. So it is in schools. There the teachers, who naturally rely upon the willing acceptance of the norms of inter-sex behaviour by the students themselves strengthened by the traditions of a healthy family and community life, have to bear a great responsibility in understanding the implications of co-education and making it a success. Willing to take risks, they must at the same time, have faith in the principle of co-education, but this faith must be tempered with caution and the lessons of experience. That is how ideals can be translated into practical terms.

Subject to these considerations, we go by the definition, given above, of co-education in its ideal and unsullied form. Within this matrix, it will be easier to assess opinion on this controversial subject.

II

The Problem

The problem of co-education is still a hotly disputed subject. Those who are in favour of co-education support it with great zeal. Those who are not are equally vehement in their opposition. There is, of course, a middle group who think that co-education may be permitted up to a certain point, say, up to the age of 12 for girls and 14 for boys. They would not, in other words, allow co-education during the period of adolescence. After the period of adolescence, that is, generally speaking, after the boys and the girls have completed their high-school education, co-education may be resumed or allowed, for, by that time, the young men and women will have reached psychic stability and attained a mature outlook in matters of sex. Some countries that have not rejected co-education outright have followed this middle path. They have adopted co-education in the primary classes and also permitted co-education at the second-degree level. Those who are ardent supporters of co-education would, of course, like to make it a continuous process without any break. Before,

however, we try to adjudicate on these varying attitudes, it would be helpful if we first set out the arguments for and against co-education as presented by the supporters and the opponents of co-education respectively.

We first present the arguments generally put forward by those who are opposed to co-education. In the first place, they refer to the moral problems created by the free association of girls and boys in high schools during the unsettled period of early adolescence. They also point out to the difficulties created for the Deans of Women and Deans of Men in co-educational institutions by the round of social activities organised by the "co-eds" who are so absorbed in the opposite sex that they fail to develop a serious interest and purpose in study. It is further argued that co-education makes girls masculine and boys effeminate. Again psychologists point to the superior mental calibre of girls after the 12th year of age compared to boys of similar age and say that this tends to discourage the boys. Another criticism relies on the fact that girls and boys not only have different extra-curricular and extra-mural interests, but also differ in their choice of subjects for school study with the result that the two sets of students will naturally want different things at school. Again, since men and women have different roles to play in later life, their education in school and college must be adjusted accordingly. There is also the problem of discipline in co-educational schools. Presumably this has reference to the "moral problems" created by the free association of boys and girls. An over-zealous teacher can frustrate the purpose of co-education by playing the role of a moral censor on every conceivable occasion. Further, the punishment that can be given to a boy may not be appropriate for a girl. Thus the use of physical chastisement which may be regarded as suitable in the case of boys will be hardly desirable in the case of girls, particularly where a male teacher is the punishing authority. Girls are generally not so self-assertive and have less urgent—or more controlled—animal spirits than boys and are so sensitive to disapproval that they cannot possibly be subjected to the same sanctions as the tougher sex. Finally, there is the question of the management of co-educational schools. A co-educational school must naturally have a mixed staff of men and women teachers who must be equally interested in co-education, will be eager to work it out, and have faith in the system. If their

outlook is different, management will undoubtedly be difficult. While men teachers, free from the domestic chores that fall to the women to perform, and also for biological reasons, can give more time to school and can attend, without periodical interruption, to management, women teachers are distinctly at a disadvantage.

Let us now turn to the arguments in favour of co-education. Supporters of co-education point out that the trend of modern society is in the direction of closer approximation of the interests, activities and life work of men and women. The economic compulsions of the age and the larger freedom of choice now available to women have brought them out of the seclusion of their homes to compete with men in practically all the occupations of life. Naturally, the invisible wall of custom and prejudice that separated women from men and left the women only to their wifely and maternal duties is also fast crumbling down. Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that women would now require, and demand, identical educational opportunities with men. Therefore, as men and women are now destined to be thrown together in various walks of life, they would understand each other better, if they were educated together instead of having been segregated in exclusive schools. On the moral question, distinguished and experienced educators have stated that co-education has actually lifted the moral tone of the co-educational schools above that of the segregated institutions. B. A. Howard, Head Master of the Addey and Stanhope School, in his interesting book on "The Mixed School", has given a well-argued answer to the so-called moral question.³ According to him, actual experience with mixed (co-educational) schools shows that (*i*) coarseness of language among boys is rarely, if ever, met ; (*ii*) there is practically no sex-tension ; (*iii*) there are fewer cases of flirtations among pupils of such schools than elsewhere, and these are generally short-lived and less likely to do harm, because they are known ; (*iv*) sexual trouble of a seriously unhealthy nature is unknown ; (*v*) sensible co-operation and unsentimental friendships between boys and girls are possible, to the great advantage of both sexes ; and (*vi*) each sex gains an added dignity in the eyes of the other. Howard declares that "these

³ See B. A. Howard : *The Mixed School*, chapter 3.



claims are supported by the large majority of teachers who have experience in both types of schools". He also points out that "indiscriminate sex-attraction is no longer an ideal ; judgment of the other sex is necessary too ; and that is just what is bound to be lacking amongst men and women until the necessary experience has been gained. The mixed school enables them to gain that experience without paying the full price for it".⁴ In other words, a co-educational school enables the boy and the girl, as they grow up, to develop a rational approach and attitude towards sex. Advocates of co-education go even so far as to claim that co-eds "run together better in the harness of married life". Moreover, a segregated girls' school or college usually offers a limited choice of subjects while if girls and boys are educated together in mixed institutions, the girls can have a larger choice of courses designed to meet individual tastes, talents and life purposes. This particular argument of course need not be pushed very far, because there is no reason why separate schools and colleges for women should not be in a position to offer a choice of courses much in the same manner as men's colleges do inclusive of courses specially appropriate for women.

The first impact of these arguments on either side seems to be as if one is listening to a case being argued by lawyers each defending his own brief. There is, however, no judge in this case to give a decision. Even Pekin, the learned author of a book professedly designed to argue the case in favour of co-education has to admit that "almost everybody is in the dark about co-education....There is any amount of opinion, but precious little evidence".⁵ The arguments presented in the preceding paragraphs do not also give a clear indisputable lead in so far as while some are based on experience, others are just *a priori* assertions. There are, for instance, many facets of the problem, some of which will be discussed later in this chapter, which can be decided only on the basis of a careful interpretation experience. In countries where there has only been a limited field of experience, final conclusions would hardly be justified on the basis of the available data. Still more dangerous are the findings of those investigators who are

⁴ Howard, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

⁵ Pekin : *Co-education*, p. 15.



searching, not for truth, but for data so selected as to support their preconceived notions. There are also certain perplexing positions taken up by people professing to speak in the name of science. One such view is based on doctrines that interpret variability of males and females on sexual grounds. On the other hand, there are, feminists who argue that even organic sexual differences between the male and the female are superficial and are due to differences in their education. All this ultimately means that the public, in the position of the ultimate judge, has to give a hearing to the advocates on both sides and must have a correct appreciation of the subject before finally making up its mind. Such a decision can only be tentative and wait on the results of the experience gained before the verdict is confirmed. The difficulty is that the public itself is too often biased one way or the other.

III

The case of India : the Existing Position

In India, the traditional social attitude towards co-education is not very propitious. Not very long ago, society frowned upon the education of girls beyond the three R's. The Western type of education was considered unsuitable for Indian girls. Co-education, except, perhaps, in the village schools, was unthinkable. Even now, after more than a century of English education in this country, the progress of education for women has not completely got out of the strait-jacket of tradition. The first Five-Year Plan pointed out that whereas women constituted nearly half the population, the girl pupils, in the primary, middle and high school stages in 1949-50 were only 28, 18 and 13 per cent. respectively of the total number of pupils studying at these stages ; while in the Universities and Colleges the percentage was only 10.4 of the total number of students. One of the reasons why the percentage of girls at the primary stage cannot be improved is that most of the States in India have not found it feasible to have the required number of separate schools for girls. "The only remedy", the Planning Commission observed, "lies in propaganda among parents to remove their prejudice against co-education in primary schools". The Commission accordingly thought that co-edu-



cation at the middle and high school stages may not be "feasible". Even at the University stage, there is considerable prejudice against co-educational colleges. The "dual" system, that is, holding men's and women's classes in the same building but at different times of the day is tolerated to some extent due to the paucity of separate buildings for women's colleges and some other special reasons. This of course, is not co-education. On the contrary, it combines some of the worst features of both segregated and co-educational schools.

The present position is that so far as the primary stage of education is concerned, while there are schools exclusively for girls, co-education is allowed in other schools. In the primary classes of the high schools for girls, boys up to a certain age are usually allowed up to class V. The higher classes in the high schools are almost exclusively meant for either girls or boys, that is, boys are not admitted to a class higher than class V in high schools for girls, nor are girls admitted to these classes in schools meant for boys. This means that our society does not yet approve of co-education at the secondary stage, that is, during the period of adolescence. The pressure of the demand for girls' education, especially in the rural areas, has in recent years brought about a shift in public attitude in favour of co-education. In the under-graduate colleges, however, the practice varies. There are colleges exclusively meant for girls and others for boys, to which students belonging to the opposite sex are not admitted under any circumstances. In other institutions where the "dual system" is operating, the same building is used for both men and women students, but they have their classes separately at different times of the day, the women's classes being held in the morning while those for men students in the day after the women's classes are over. That is the usual practice, for example, in the big colleges of Calcutta and is known as the "shift system". The whole institution with all the shifts functioned as one unit until, under a directive of the University Grants Commission, the two shifts had to be constituted into separate independent units, with separate affiliation to the University. Other colleges have combined the shift system with co-education, that is to say, while arrangements have been made for holding classes exclusively for women in the morning shift, the day shift admits both men and women



students. Usually, in such colleges, women students who have taken up an Honours subject or those who wish to follow a science course are allowed to join the day classes along with the men students. This is allowed to avoid duplication of laboratory facilities and for want of qualified science teachers, as well as for a more effective use of the facilities for Honours teaching. Lastly, there are institutions which are genuinely co-educational. In these institutions men and women students are admitted on equal terms. They sit in the same classes, follow the same curriculum of studies and have equal access to the facilities of a common college life. The only exception is that the women students have their own "common rooms", separate from those of the men students.

A brief study of the system outlined above shows that (*i*) Indian society does not generally approve of co-education at the secondary stage : and that (*ii*) considerations of economy and a more effective utilisation of resources rather than any radical change of approach to the problem of co-education have been responsible for the arrangements made for the teaching of women students in some schools and colleges designed originally and primarily for men students. This is also supported by the fact that, in the countryside, institutions exclusively for women are difficult to maintain on a self-supporting basis : the number of women students is not likely to be sufficient to maintain a separate institution—particularly, a college—exclusively for them on a viable basis. Most of the colleges "sponsored" by the Government are co-educational for this reason rather than to meet a social demand for co-education. Society, in other words, has accepted co-education as an expediency rather than as an accepted principle. It is considered to be the second best, the first preference being for separate colleges for women, if possible.

Another factor which tilts the scales in favour of co-education in India is the relative paucity of qualified and competent women teachers for colleges and universities. The teaching profession is at present the least attractive of the careers open to our talented young scholars. There is a great dearth of teachers with specialised skills, particularly in science subjects up to the Honours Standard. On the other hand, women's education is not sufficiently advanced to produce, in requisite numbers, teachers with recognised standards of academic excellence, or of sufficient professional standing,



even for the women's colleges, except in a limited number of subjects. Therefore, such of the men's colleges as have been able to secure the services of well-reputed teachers attract women students more readily than women's colleges themselves. This has resulted in a general preference for men teachers who are, by and large, rightly or wrongly, supposed to be better qualified teachers than their women counter parts. Many of the women's colleges have men teachers. It is to be noted, however, that the supply of women teachers has considerably improved in recent years, not only in the humanities but also in the science subjects. Another advantage of men's colleges is that they are in a better position to offer a large choice of subjects and Honours courses, particularly in the metropolitan areas. This is specially attractive to students who want to take up unusual combinations, or such expensive subjects as, for example, Geology. No doubt these advantages can also be secured in the "dual" colleges but, for reasons already explained, these colleges are, at best, a make-shift arrangement combining at their worst, some of the most undesirable features of segregated as well as of co-educational institutions.

At the post-graduate stage, education is necessarily co-educational, though in some States, separate women's universities have been established. In spite of the reluctance, in certain conservative quarters, to send girls to study with the boys in the post-graduate classes, such cases are now extremely rare and the general picture is one of willing acceptance of the necessity, let us call it unavoidable necessity, if not the desirability, of co-education at the University stage. Men and women who have already been admitted to a degree have certainly reached a stage of maturity which makes any discrimination on the ground of sex perfectly incompatible with the purposes of higher education. A logical consequence of this is that there is no differentiation between male and female candidates at the M.A. or M.Sc. Examinations while at the under-graduate and the first Degree examinations, female candidates get the prefix 'F' to their roll numbers and are seated at separate examination centres, whether they come from segregated or co-educational institutions.

I have so far been discussing the form and structure of the Indian educational system from the point of view of co-education. I have refrained from discussing the impact of co-education on the boys

and girls of the co-educational institutions. Before I discuss this, it would be convenient if I briefly refer to the experience of America and some countries of Europe.

IV

Early Experiences

Any history of co-education must begin with the home which is the primary co-educational institution ordained by nature. For a long time the only place for education for girls was the home. A school was thought to be a place where only boys should be sent for education. Education, in the formal sense, was for a long time thought to be a male prerogative. Women were thought to be fit only for domestic duties. The proper place for training in such duties was naturally the home. Thus, though early nurture for both male and female children was necessarily at home, the type of education to be given to either was, from early times, considered to be different from that of the other. It was much later in the history of education that co-education in school was thought of as something necessary or desirable. Even then, co-education as a theory and or as a method of education, as one writer has put it, cannot claim "a distinguished history", or, as another writer has put it, co-education has only been "sporadic". Its development has been compared to "the fluctuating and spasmodic motion of a football scrimmage".

We find some evidence of co-education in ancient times. For instance, according to one good authority, boys and girls sat side by side in the schools of ancient Greece and Rome. There is also evidence that boys and girls attended the monastery schools of the Greek Church for some centuries, after which, however, all traces of such co-education are lost. In Rome, though boys and girls were educated together in some schools, such education was probably confined to the country districts and seems to have been a matter of convenience, for these schools were not officially recognised. One reason why co-education, even in its attenuated form, did not continue, was the influence of the Roman Catholic Church. The feeling



was not only that girls should be separated from boys but also that boys should be separated from girls. B. A. Howard, author of "The Mixed School", quotes the view of Thomas Elyot who held it expedient that when a male child was seven years of age "he should be taken away from the company of women". In ancient China, he reminds, the girl received only household training. In ancient Egypt, a girl could be taught to read and write, but little else. Among the Hebrews, however, girls and boys together received primary education, but the school was the home which also imparted moral training. At Athens the girls received no regular education beyond a little domestic science—making men's and women's clothes, pastry and bread. The ideal of womanhood, in the well-known phrase which Thucydides puts into the mouth of Pericles, was declared to be "not to be spoken of either for praise or blame among men". In Sparta, the position of women was much better. Girls shared in the physical training at the gymnasium and also joined the boys in festival processions. Co-education was not, however, a feature of the Spartan schools where boys had to undergo a rigid discipline on pain of heavy corporal punishment. The Greek philosopher, Plato, however, was a believer in the theory that there should be same education for men and women in association. He admits that women may be physically weaker than men but they are essentially of similar nature to men and are equally capable of sharing in government. In his "*Laws*", Plato makes education universal and compulsory for citizens of both sexes. Even in the matter of horsemanship and physical training he would put the girls on a par with the boys. He suggests, however, that boys and girls "shall play together up to the age of six but after that they shall learn different things—though girls may, if they please, share in the boys' instruction". Plato's own practice as a teacher was co-educational and women were admitted to the inner circle of his Academy, the first university, on equal terms with men.

In the early years of Christianity, schools established by the Church were segregational. Religion attached great value to celibacy among men. Monasticism was based upon the sinfulness of human reproduction that somehow cast a slur of inferiority upon the female sex. In the Eastern Church, however, girls as well as boys attended monastic schools, up till the age of 16 or 17. Many of these schools

were partly secular. This system appears to have been in operation for several centuries. In general, the religious orders controlled the educational system. Some of the co-educational landmarks were Charlemagne's court school at Aachan (eighth century), Alfred the Great's court school (ninth century), the court school of Vittorino da Feltre at Mantua (established 1423) and similar institutions combining home-life with a scholastic curriculum. The schools of the Renaissance period were of this type. The co-educational school was, however, still the exception, and girls' education received a set-back with the dissolution of the nunneries. The English grammar school which was born out of the old monastic schools did not admit women. This was the general picture in the early years of the Reformation era. By the middle of the 16th century, however, and under the influence of Protestantism, the demand for women's education began to grow steadily. The Bunbury Grammar School, founded in 1594, admitted girls up to the age of nine but their number was limited. Martin Luther, who is called the father of modern co-education, not only wanted girls to be educated but wanted the girls and boys to be educated together. It is stated that his influence was responsible for the primary mixed schools of Germany, Scotland and New England. Inspite of this encouragement, co-education was still not accepted as a theory. The general picture continued to be one of segregation of sexes with no or little education for the girls. It was in America that the example of New England was followed in the district schools in small towns, though here again the girls probably got seldom beyond the primary stage of reading and writing.

V

Co-Education in Some Selected Countries

(a) ENGLAND

In England, education is partly the result of private effort and partly of public policy. The State has not accepted co-education formally in principle. The mixed State schools have been largely a result of circumstances, not the consequence of any deliberate policy. The private co-educational schools, on the other hand, have developed



out of the faith of their founders. Many of these schools, however, had to close down due to general apathy and prejudice.

One of the earliest schools to be established in England, the Portman Hall School, founded by Mme. Bodichon, in the late fifties of the last century had to be discontinued in 1864. A few other pioneering efforts were also made. The first fully co-educational boarding school, educating children up to eighteen, which attained distinction was established in 1893. This was the famous "Bedales" founded by J. H. Badley. Badley had been educated at Rugby, the famous public school in England, and was inspired by seeing co-education in practice in Norway while he was still an under-graduate. When, however, he opened his own school, it was originally meant for boys only, though Badley's intention was to convert it later into a co-educational school. In 1898, the school turned to co-education. Its immediate result was the removal of thirty boys. In 1900, the school moved to Hampshire with 7 girls, 68 boys and a resident staff of 9. The number increased to 90 boys and 30 girls in the following year, and a junior department was opened. It was not till 1902, however, that the school was reognised by the Board of Education. Several foreign students came to join the institution. By 1913, a School Parliament was introduced and the students were gradually allowed a degree of self-government characteristic of all progressive schools. From 8-30 A.M. to 8-30 P.M. the children irrespective of sex, shared each other's company, classes and meals. A contemporary of Bedales was the Bakewell Grammar School in Derbyshire. In 1902, this school had 143 boarders of all ages, of whom nearly half were girls. Other schools followed. One of the interesting experiments in co-education was that made by Cecil Grant who founded the Keswick School in 1898. Grant was a clergyman who acted in the belief that the segregated public schools had failed to achieve a high religious standard because of the separation of the sexes, and felt that their monasticism made those schools "strongholds of immorality." Punishment at Keswick was, however, "severe and repeated when necessary"—for boys : detention and corporal punishment ; for girls : detention and temporary suspension from school life. This was approved by Government inspectors. Mention may be made of another school, St. George's, which was founded in 1906. This school, described as a daughter



school of Keswick, is said to have been established out of a recognition of the failure of "the shibboleths of the smoking-room or the half-truths of the boudoir" and was meant to establish "a right relationship between the sexes." Here also the principle of corporal punishment for the boys was followed whereas girls were treated to "purely verbal persuasion." According to Grant, who became the head-master of this school, "this salutary method of correction and the respect, if not affection with which it is regarded by the average public school-boy, represents one of the finest traditions of the English public schools," while, again quoting Grant, "girls' punishment, which is less severe, considered objectively, is often in reality heavier, owing to the girl's greater sensibility". Grant thought that it was possible to maintain all that was good and great in the conduct of the public schools of England in the co-educational schools while some of their vices might be eliminated.

It is not necessary to subject these observations to any critical analysis. The fact is that these pioneering schools, inspite of their faults, did valuable work in educating public opinion. By 1897, there came into existence an "Association for the Promotion of the Co-education of Boys and Girls" whose manifesto on "Why Boys and Girls should be Co-educated" would, in the words of L. B. Pekin, scarcely need altering to be applicable today. Its final point was that whatever is wanted in the life of a nation must first be introduced into its schools, and that the nation still wanted a better understanding between the sexes. Inspite of these efforts, however, co-education in England and Wales did not make much headway. In 1926 there were separate schools for boys and girls, numbering 3,875 for boys and 3,636 for girls. The mixed schools were 250 of the senior mixed type and 1,615 of the junior mixed type and 14,728 mixed schools in which over 2 million boys and girls were taught. In other words, the mixed elementary schools came to be regarded as the normal type in England. In an address before the Incorporated Association of Headmasters, in 1927, R. F. Cholmeley, President, stated that the proportion of mixed (secondary) schools to boys' schools was almost exactly as 7 to 8, and the number of boys educated in them a little less than 2 to 5. "Clearly the origin of most of them," he said, "whether as new schools or as old schools remodelled, was due to convenience; the interesting point about them is the growth of a belief in them



on educational grounds, and the remarkable success of their work."

On a general summing up of the situation with reference to co-education in England, it may be said that, at the elementary stage, the mixed school largely predominates over the other types, with over 2 million boys and girls being educated in these schools. Secondly, even in regard to the evolution of the mixed school, there was no well-settled theory behind it. The mixed school came up largely as a matter of convenience rather than conviction. Once set up, however, this type came to stay, possibly in appreciation of the fact that it works, and works to the advantage of both boys and girls. Until the middle of the last century girls used to be given what was described as "education of accomplishments" which in practice, meant scripture, reading, writing, music and painting. On the other hand, the education of the boys, say in the Grammar School, was more thorough and systematic. Naturally, the pioneers of higher education for girls started by copying the boys' curriculum. It was not till 1865 that girls gained the right of admission to some of the public examinations taken by the boys. This was naturally the first step towards the admission of girls to boys' schools, especially where separate schools for girls could not be established for financial or other practical reasons. Pioneers like Pestalozzi and Mary Wollstonecraft had already provided a theory of co-education. Pestalozzi had also founded what might be called co-educational schools at Stanz and Borgdorf while Mary Wollstonecraft had passed the opinion that "to improve both sexes they ought, not only in private families but in public schools, to be educated together". Educationists, however, agree that the English co-educational schools, as already stated, are not the products of any theory, passionately held, about the desirability of co-education. This was true of the elementary as well as the secondary school. Reference has already been made to the popularity of the elementary mixed schools. So far as the secondary schools are concerned the progress in co-education has also been remarkable. In 1905, there were 184 mixed schools enjoying State aid which meant that they were recognised as good schools. In 1926, the number rose to 361. These schools had a total enrolment of about one hundred thousand boys and girls, which was about one-fourth of the total number of pupils in the



secondary schools receiving grants from the Board of Education. Inspite of this remarkable progress of co-education during the first 25 years or so of the present century, secondary schools exclusively for girls and receiving such aid increased faster than the mixed schools. As regards the University stage there is no opposition in principle to co-education ; all the newer universities are in fact, open to men and women upon equal terms.

(b) FRANCE, ITALY, SPAIN

We may now turn to the Continent for a brief reference to the question of co-education. Generally speaking, the Roman Catholic countries of Europe do not favour co-education, except in the primary stage, while in the Protestant countries co-education is found much more frequently. To the former group belong France and Italy. In France, co-education even in the primary stage is favoured as a matter of necessity, not of preference. It is more often regarded as a second-best.

The choice of elementary schools in the country districts of France now rests in the hands of the local *Maire* (Mayor). He makes the choice whether a school shall be mixed or segregated after consulting local opinion. Boys and girls, however, follow the same curriculum even when they are in separate schools. Of the 546 secondary schools (1939) in France only two are mixed. So far as Italy is concerned the principle of co-education had been accepted before the turn of the century. If any girl wanted to proceed beyond elementary education, she was permitted, on application, to attend the local boys' secondary schools. These schools, were, however, co-instructional rather than fully co-educational. Girls above the age of twelve were required to sit on separate benches and there was no social mixing. So far as University education was concerned, it was in 1909 that universities opened their classes to both men and women.

In Spain, however, the State educational system is, broadly speaking, a co-educational one. It began with the boys schools to which girls were gradually admitted. Schools under the control of the Church continued to be separate.



(c) SWITZERLAND, GERMANY, RUSSIA

Of the Protestant countries, schools in Switzerland show all the three types, namely, mixed, dual and separate. In Germany, the mixed schools, teaching up to the primary standards, are quite popular. These schools educate boys and girls up to the age of fourteen years. Co-education is not, however, approved during the period of adolescence. This rigidity has since been relaxed. Since the first World War there has been some progress towards co-education in the secondary schools in certain areas. The opinion of teachers in Germany, however, is supposed to be unfavourable to co-education. There are certain evening High Schools which provided courses for adults wishing to join universities and which admit both men and women. In other words, German opinion is not yet quite decided about the desirability of women joining men's institutions. There are some reasons for it. For one thing, there has been no women's movement in Germany comparable to that of England. Generally speaking, German women were known to be appreciated better as housewives than anything else, so that higher education for them was more or less confined to the more exceptional or ambitious girls. Such girls were admitted in small numbers to the boys' gymnasia which they attended for a course in Latin, Greek and Mathematics required for the University entrance examination. Those that joined the boys' classes, however, took little or no part in the social or extra-curricular life of the school. Here also, as in the secondary schools of Italy, there was co-instruction rather than co-education. Boys and girls did not sit together and the admission of the girl students was subject to strict regulations about physical, intellectual and moral qualifications. Under Nazi Germany co-instructional schools were limited to the primary stage. There were no mixed schools either among the State schools or the private secondary schools. In Russia, even before the Revolution the State had been taking great interest in the education of women. Peter the Great was a champion of the emancipation of women and of the equality of men and women in society. Russia is known to be the first country in the world to establish State secondary schools for girls in 1764, during the reign of Catherine the Great. L. B. Pekin records that Catherine's "Original bold attempt at a democratic educational

scheme, open to all social classes and both sexes, free and secular, should not be forgotten by those who are finding the same thing difficult to achieve, more than a hundred and fifty years later." After the Revolution co-education was introduced on a universal and compulsory basis by requiring all girls' schools to accept boys and *vice-versa*. The proportion of women teachers U.S.S.R. at present is 70 per cent in the primary and 51 per cent in the secondary schools.

(d) BULGARIA

Of the countries in Europe where co-education has made great progress mention may be made of erstwhile Bulgaria where co-education had been accepted as a matter of public policy, not merely of expediency. In the thirties, all of the primary and Intermediate schools, and 79 out of 116 secondary schools were co-educational. In fact, in the countries of Central Europe primary schools are almost wholly mixed.

(e) SCANDINAVIAN COUNTRIES

Among the Scandinavian countries, all elementary schools in Finland are co-educational, while of the State secondary schools, the largest group consists of mixed schools. Of the private secondary schools, out of 143 such schools, 120 are mixed. In Sweden, a Commission which sat in 1919 to consider co-education reported in favour of mixed schools and most of its recommendations were adopted by Parliament. As a result, all State primary schools and almost all post-primary "middle" schools are mixed. Of the State secondary schools, about 80 per cent are co-educational. In Norway, all the primary schools and 95 per cent of the secondary schools are co-educational, while in Denmark all primary and secondary schools, both urban and rural, are co-educational.

(f) U.S.A.

We may now turn to the United States of America, where it is the segregated school which is said to be "without history." The co-educational school in the United States is held up as "the



embodiment of the American doctrine of equal educational opportunities for all." The almost universal application of co-education in the U.S.A. is partly due to its democratic view of education and partly due to historical reasons. As an American Government report put it, co-education was "natural, customary, impartial, economical, convenient and beneficial." It was deemed natural, because it followed the ordinary structure of the family and of society ; customary, because it was in harmony with the habits and sentiments of every day life ; impartial, because it afforded the sexes the same opportunities of culture : economical, because it used school funds to the best advantage ; convenient, from the point of view of teaching and discipline ; beneficial to the minds, moral habits and development of the pupils.¹ The American educational system has another characteristic, namely, the preponderance of women teachers. Not that men teachers are not preferred but because the men themselves prefer other occupations which are more lucrative. It is not that there are no single-sex schools in the United States. The entire system of State schools is, of course, co-educational. In some of the Western States of U.S.A., however, there is a considerable number of schools and colleges under private management which are organised for one sex only (I am not using the term "segregated" to describe such schools because segregation in U.S.A. has a different connotation). These single-sex schools were not, however, so much a result of opposition to co-education as of a sense of class exclusiveness reflected in the reluctance of the wealthier classes to send their children to the same school as the poorer class of immigrants with extremely low standards of living. This is also true of the Eastern States of U.S.A. where a declining trend in co-education has been noticed. The colour bar also partially explains such reluctance. The popular estimate of co-education in the U.S.A. shows varying opinions. There is no doubt about the universal acceptance of the principle that educational opportunities should be thrown open equally to all men and women in America. Inspite of this a leading University in the U.S.A., I mean Harvard, does not admit women students and even now it is a single-sex school inspite of Radcliffe. Among the Universities, Ohio was the first

¹ L. B. Pekin, *op cit.* pp. 144-45.



to open its doors to women in 1833, and this is now the general policy of the Universities. According to the U.S. Official Directory for 1957-58, of 1937 institutions of higher education in U.S.A., as many as 1460 are co-educational. The present situation is that all the children reading in elementary schools are being co-educated while 95 per cent of the students of the secondary schools are receiving their education in co-educational schools. Though these figures are very impressive, and as one can say, decisive, actually a proper assessment is difficult on account of the striking contrasts that characterise the American educational system. The schools show a wide divergence in quality, some being very good and well-reputed, while others stand at the opposite end. Some schools show a remarkably high standard of discipline and achievement while others do not. One opinion states that American women are in some ways "more feminine" than the modern type of English women while others have noted complete absence of sex-strain. On the other hand, the high rate of divorce in America does not appear to be a recommendation for co-education. At any rate it goes against the argument that co-education makes for a regime of healthy sexual adjustment among men and women, and happier married lives. Supporters of co-education, however, argue that, at its worst, co-education may have acted as one of the factors influencing the divorce rate in so far as it may have led to teen-age marriages; couples have married in haste and repented at leisure. A more balanced view seems to be that the high rate of divorce in the United States is the consequence of a multiplicity of complex causes. The Kinsey Report, however, has thrown a floodlight on a disquieting facet of the young American's sex life and unless it could be proved that sex delinquency is confined more or less to the "co-ed"s it would not be fair to make it the primary cause of broken marriages. The magnifying glass should be directed to other spots as well.

VI

The Segregated School Versus The Co-educational School ?

Let us turn to the one question which we have been waiting so long to be put : which type of school is to be preferred : the Segregated School, or the Co-educational School ?

Now, it is only the actual experience of a co-educational school that will ordinarily entitle a person to sit in judgment over it, for those who have never been inside a co-educational school have a very misty idea of such a school, partly the result of his own imagination and partly may be, of his built-in predilections. The author having had no direct experience of a co-educational school (though he has been teaching at a co-education University for a good many years) shares with all other Indians placed in a similar predicament the initial difficulty, namely, the apparent lack of authority to speak one way or the other. But, then, this difficulty need not be over-stressed. Lack of one's own experience of a co-educational school is more than compensated by the recorded views of those who have had such experience and have given the world the benefit of such experience. Secondly, the experience of different countries in co-education may be taken as dependable guide-line for a tentative judgment ; and when there are sharp conflicts in views, and practices vary from one extreme to the other, all judgments tend to be tentative. Thirdly, while one may not have direct experience of a co-educational school, one has certainly experience of single sex schools. Finally, one should not discount the value of deductive reasoning, which is the one method by which a tangled web of facts may be properly understood and analysed with reference to certain standards of values cherished and upheld by society. The overwhelming number of secondary as well as senior basic schools in India are single-sex schools. It is in this latter type of schools, with adolescent enrolment, that most of the problems that cause anxiety and tension occur. It is here that the first consciousness of sex stirs in the minds of the young girl and the young boy and the utmost care and circumspection is necessary to see that the natural curiosity about matters of sex that comes to the young people of either sex at this age is not diverted to wrong channels.

My first finding is that it is quite wrong to hold the view that schools meant exclusively for boys or for girls are free of sex problems. They are not. On the contrary, the most obnoxious forms of sex activity may be found in such schools. This is particularly marked in "dual schools" and colleges. Too frequently they bear evidence of distorted and unhealthy sex obsession. It ranges from suggestive, even obscene writings on the walls of the class rooms or corridors,

to the practice of homosexuality. Particularly those boys and girls who have not had the experience of a happy home life are likely to develop a highly imaginative attitude towards problems of sex. It may range from regarding every youthful girl as a fairy goddess or as someone to whom one must make love. This may be idealised as when the girl consciously sets about making herself pretty and demure while the boys start writing silly verses. It may also take more sordid forms when letters are clandestinely passed or there are secret meets. I have known at least of one case where some girls from a segregated school used to meet their teenage counterparts from a neighbouring boys' school at a secret rendezvous which was subsequently discovered by the parent of one of the boys. If there is a married girl in a girls' school or if one of the school mates gets married and rejoins the school, she becomes the centre of curiosity and the most intimate of her friends may receive their first vicarious introduction to the mysteries of sex which in some cases makes them fall for the first boy friend that turns up.

A co-educational school has this advantage over the segregated school that it fails to make every girl a Venus and every boy an Adonis. For one thing, the boys and the girls are under the constant watch of their fellow students and any undue familiarity is likely to be detected and checked before it is allowed to proceed far. Constant mixing rubs off the romantic halo round the Venus while the boy struggling with his algebra becomes something less than an Adonis. They become real class mates instead of mere boys and girls. There is hardly any necessity for the adoption of repressive measures. If any affair of what may be described as "calf-love" develops inspite of the usual preoccupations of school life, whether in the class room or on the campus, the healthy atmosphere of a common school, a friendly word in season, a slight pressure of public opinion, a frank talk with the class teacher (if it comes to that stage) will provide so many opportunities to put the relationship of the boy and the girl back on a normal basis. Most effective of all as a preventive of unhealthy sex relations is the fact that a mixed school, like a home, offers so many and recurring opportunities for the development of healthy normal relationships among boys and girls that there is little scope for any aberrant behaviour pattern to develop. On the other hand, the chances are that any boy who may be suspected of



any such conduct it likely to be put in his proper place sooner than he may like.

The experiences of different countries point to one desideratum, namely, an essential prerequisite for the success of a mixed school is that the staffs of such schools should also contain a fair proportion of teachers of both sexes, preferably married. In the more advanced countries, women teachers are almost completely replacing the male teachers in the junior positions in the co-educational schools, primary as well as secondary. The reason commonly advanced is that men are not interested in appointment as junior teachers. On the other hand, women teachers seem to have a grievance that the senior positions, particularly, those of heads of schools, are too often filled by male administrators who are attracted by the larger emoluments and the authority that such posts carry. It is difficult to lay down any artificial rules in such cases which are in fact the results of complex socio-economic forces. There are also a socio-biological aspect of the question. The common impression that men are more capable of holding positions of authority and responsibility than women may be an arguable point. The fact that women make better teachers may also be a special application of the theory that teachers are born, not made. The belief in male authority may have been derived from its ancestry, for the roots of the patriarchy go deep down into antiquity : it is supposed to have acquired the sanctity of a long unbroken line of hereditary transmission. On the other hand, belief in the theory that women are born teachers—the expression itself bears a biological derivation—is perhaps due to the fact that the education of the child begins with the mother who by her natural affection for and instinctive understanding of the child has the necessary preliminary background for the role of a teacher for which she might elect in future. All these facts may be true within limits. That they are not absolute truths is shown by the remarkable success that women have attained even in fields so far considered exclusively to be a male preserve, just as men successfully established their stakes in fields generally considered to be the domain of the fair sex. Even in the practice of the culinary arts, leading *chefs* are all men : in the world of fashions, it is the male expert who designs what milady should wear at Ascot or at the Las vegas. Even in India, the *darzi* is a mere male. So why

should the Misses Beale or Buss object to male headmasters of co-educational schools? But these are irrelevant considerations in the context of the issue with which we are now concerned. It is that all co-educational schools should be staffed by *both* men and women. After all, we cannot ignore the fact that even when they are studying in co-educational schools, boys and girls have separate interests or inclinations, particularly in campus activities, and they should have supervisors belonging to the appropriate sex. A composite staff is also useful, if not absolutely necessary, for dealing with cases of indiscipline that may require discreet enquiries and specialised handling, even frank talks. The form of punishment must also be suited to the sex. For example, rule by physical chastisement has been a long tradition of the boys' schools. Caning, even for minor offences, is a regular practice in such schools. It is said that the culprits themselves appreciate such punishments—of course, within limits, for some times unspeakable brutalities are known to have been perpetrated in the name of punishment. Naturally, the form of punishment has to be different for girls. A preponderance of women teachers may make the boys turn "soft"; a preponderance of men teachers may make the *teachers* soft—towards the girls, thus introducing an element of discrimination in the treatment of boys and girls. And then there may be the possibility of a teacher-pupil affair. Here, again, it is the social attitude that matters. One eminent critic of co-education thought that it would prejudice chances of marriage for, if men and women have too much experience of each other before marriage, it might lead to the disillusionment which too much familiarity might breed, and the consequent aversion to marriage. This is rebutted by the other extreme view that co-education results in hasty teenage marriages. We have not got reliable statistics of how such marriages turn out, unless, as in America, we try to relate the higher divorce rates to such hasty, therefore, unadjusted, marriages.

Now since even a breath of suspicion may spell ruin not only to the parties concerned but also to the school, educationists in many countries have decided to play safe and refused to permit co-education during the period of adolescence. That is the practice in India where social norms are still strongly against the free mixing of boys and girls during this period. Even the British Board of Education is

hesitant to deviate from social norms and would rather play safe. In fact, the British public, however advanced they may be in their view about equal opportunities for men and women, in the sphere of co-education whatever progress has been achieved has been due to a pragmatic approach rather than adherence to any theory.⁷ Actually it is in the private schools, some of them of great merit, that co-education was tried, and tried, successfully, as a matter of policy. In this, England is in line with many other countries where co-education has been accepted, not as a matter of choice but as one of practical convenience, in the logic of circumstances. Thus, even in the United States, co-education started due to historical reasons. American civilization, as one writer has observed, was in a hurry in the early days of settlement. Population was unevenly, and in many areas, very sparsely distributed. It was neither practical, nor economical, to establish separate schools for boys and girls. Thus, from the very beginning, district schools in the smaller settlements have been co-educational. Girls at that time rarely proceeded beyond the three R's. But as population expanded rapidly and the schools also multiplied, the tradition of co-education continued, particularly as there was no strong demand for single-sex schools. Official view has remained neutral, apparently because of the American doctrine of equal educational opportunities for all. There are, however, certain countries which have accepted co-education as a matter of State policy : others, like Nazi Germany which, under Hitler, demolished all mixed schools on his coming to power, though actually not going that far, do not favour co-education, particularly during the vulnerable period of adolescence, certainly not as a matter of public policy. India belongs to this latter category. And yet those who advocate co-education contend that it is exactly during the period of adolescence that the need for co-education is most urgent and that its moral and intellectual advantages are most marked.

What is clear from this brief discussion is that though we can argue the case for or against co-education, as if we are in two sharply

⁷ The essentially conservative nature of the British public is shown also by the fact that it was only in 1928 that the right to vote was conceded to all women on equal terms with men.



divided schools—we have set out these arguments in a concise form in the first section of this essay—the ultimate outcome depends on society's acceptance of one or the other side of the case. This again depends on the prevailing social norms as well as social history, and the people's ideas about the role of women in society. The social attitude may indeed be modified, even changed, due to reasons of convenience, economy or urgency of a new situation. With experience of co-education, the initial antipathy, if not opposition, may turn to tolerance ; and when, finally, it comes to stay, little need is felt to discover a theoretical support for the change. The question then turns to such issues as curricular adjustments, organizational problems and last, but not least, the extent to which sex differences influence our outlook in the approach towards a solution of these problems.

VII

Some Specific Issues

Let us now take up the question, first, of how far sex differences are likely to influence the academic life of boys and girls.

The first point that we have to face up to is that girls attain the age of puberty earlier than boys. The consequence is that after puberty girls are more liable to fatigue and less able to stand prolonged exertion. The period of adolescence is a period of recurrent strain for girls with the result that her studies may be adversely affected. - From the academic point of view the age 14-15 is likely to be a period of strenuous work because these are the years when boys and girls have to prepare for the school leaving (School Final or Higher Secondary) examinations. The boys, however, do not suffer under any special difficulties because of the change which, in any case, usually occurs after they leave the school. Accordingly, educational programmes for girls are to be properly phased in view of their special difficulties. In a co-educational school, it would be difficult to enforce two different sets of programmes, one for girls, the other for boys, or to allow for different standards of achievement tests. These differences are also to be taken into account in regard to games that call for strenuous



physical exertion. This, of course, is so well-understood that the segregation of boys and girls, in the play-field or the gymnasium, at least during a vulnerable and critical period of a girls' life, would not be held as a detraction of the co-educational principle. In fact, some educationists are of the opinion that the girls should take their school leaving examination not earlier than 17 for by that time the critical period will be over.

Does all this mean that because of the varying rates of development of boys and girls, there should be different ratings of their learning? The fact is that there are varying rates of development even among boys, just as there are among individual girls. The question is whether such differences are to be recognised in evaluating achievement tests in the same manner as, say, handicaps are allowed in track events? The answer, of course, is in the negative. Just as no special consideration is given to physically handicapped candidates at the time of the examination (except that totally blind candidates are allowed the assistance of an amanuensis), any possible differences between boys and girls on the basis of their physiological differences cannot be taken into account without introducing an imponderable factor in the method of determining a standard test. Moreover, it has not yet been clearly established in what particular way physiological differences may adversely affect the performance of girl candidates. Anyway, such differences, so far as they exist, do not affect the co-educational schools alone; they would equally affect schools that are exclusively meant for girls, if the girls have to take a common Board or University examination along with the boys. The only rational way to resolve these doubts is to make a statistical analysis of the actual performance of boys and girls at a test. But there also the difficulty would be that achievement is not always a correct indicator of mental or intellectual abilities. Sometimes a candidate at an examination may make up for his or her intellectual deficiency by a greater capacity for cramming. Actually, examination results do not betray any fundamental differences in accomplishments in the case of a majority of the subjects for examination. The only subject in which boys have been shown generally to be more proficient than girls is Mathematics, but, as actual investigations have proved, that proficiency is marked even among smaller boys and girls which shows that the failure of the girls to



reach the standard of the boys is not due to the circumstances of puberty. On the contrary, though this fact is not indubitably proved, girls have been found to do better than boys in literature.

There is another aspect of the question. If it can be proved that there is such a thing as a natural inclination of girls as a class towards certain subjects of study and of boys for certain others, or that differences in achievements between the two sexes are accountable in physiological terms, the conclusion would be that boys and girls should not be taught together and that their curricular contents should not be the same. Now, this is ancillary to the more general question, frequently asked, *viz.* whether women's education should be devised separately from that of the boys. If the answer is in the affirmative, it would challenge the very basis of co-education. Fortunately, the demand to-day is that boys and girls should prepare for the same examination. So long as a woman's vocation and interests were considered to be radically different from man's, there was some sense in framing courses and syllabi for girls on a pattern different from that of the boys. But when women have to meet men on equal terms in the competition for a living, there should not be any curricular wall of division between them, a division which would be a real impediment in the way of establishing an identity of opportunities for both girls and boys.

A solution of the conundrum will be found, not in devising two sets of examinations for girls and boys, but by offering a larger choice of subjects from which both could choose according to their respective inclinations. Under these circumstances a girl might take up Needlework instead of Mathematics not necessarily because she loves Needlework more, but because she loves Mathematics less; or if a boy does *not* take up cookery, it is because he does not want to be a cook. In the post-graduate classes of the Calcutta University, for instance, we find that more girls take up Philosophy than boys. In some other subjects also, such as History, Political Science, Modern Indian Vernaculars, girl students are about to outnumber the boys. Apart from the liberal education that we want to give equally to our boys and girls it is possible to make education need-based. For girls, like boys, should be free to choose their subjects, a knowledge of which they may think, or they may be so advised, would be useful.



for their future careers. The Consultative Committee of the British Board of Education, which considered this question, said :

" Let boys and girls have a large choice of subjects and teachers a wide latitude in directing the choice of subjects—such is the policy which we would advocate. It would be fatal, at the present juncture, to prescribe one curriculum for boys and another for girls."

—which means that the curriculum should be the same for boys and girls but that a larger choice of subjects should be allowed. Now, these varying preferences should not be taken as an outcome of sex differences but of aptitude differences. In fact, it has been held by many authorities that the difference in achievement between the sexes, on an average, is so small as to be negligible ; it is certainly less than the difference between a good boy and a bad boy, or between a good girl and an indifferent girl. According to Professor Burt, quoted by Mr. Howard, " During school age, sex differences are extremely small. In mixed departments where the boys are taught the same curriculum by the same teachers, the differences are so small as to defy demonstration until very large groups have been tested." On the contrary, it may be possible to argue, for instance, that if there are sharp differences between emotional responses or attitudes, then if they are thrown together in a co-educational school, they might end up by correcting each other's lack of balance.

Turning to the organizational aspect of co-education, it should be obvious from the very start that a co-educational school must, in its very nature, be a good deal different from the single-sex school. The problem of curricular adjustment has already been referred to. The co-educational school must be in a position to offer a larger variety of options within the syllabic frame-work of the University (or Board) Examination from a common list for both boys and girls. It should be in line with the spirit of co-education for the options to be available equally to boys and girls unless there are special reasons for earmarking particular options for either boys or girls. This larger variety of options would be useful for both the sexes, for the simple reason that a single-sex school would not find it either necessary or feasible to load the time-table with too many options. But the mixed school, on its part, would have to be fairly big in size in order to be able to produce the necessary enrol-

ment for each of these options and make the school academically viable. It would, accordingly, be desirable, say, for two otherwise uneconomic school-units, for example, in a rural area, one for boys and the other for girls, to unite together to make the new (mixed) school viable. A recent press release by the UNI shows that in India, as many as 85 per cent. of the secondary schools are not economically viable. Of the 25,992 secondary schools in the country, 60 per cent. have less than 160 students each on its rolls while two-thirds of these schools have an enrolment of 100 students each.*

Another organizational problem that the mixed school will have to face is the question of staff. It has already been stated that a school with a mixed enrolment (that is, enrolment of both boys and girls) should have a mixed staff consisting of both male and female teachers. It is even held that if the head of the institution is a man, as he usually is, the teacher immediately next to him should be a woman. There may be some hesitation on the part of some guardians to send their boys to be taught by women (that is, in a secondary school, for there appears to be little objection to mixed primary schools) lest they should lose their "manliness" and turn "soft". Similarly there are parents who would not like to send their daughters to a co-educational school lest they should lose their womanly virtues and affect the mien and manners of men. Now these fears may very well be exaggerated. There will be both masters and mistresses to look after the long-term interests of the students. It has repeatedly been emphasised by advocates of co-education that teachers of a co-educational school should be fully identified with the cause of co-education and should take special care to see that pupils committed to their charge turn out to be good citizens, to hold their own equally with, if not do better than, the products of the segregated schools in every decent job.

The question of discipline is another bone of contention. Now, discipline as a principle of conduct is the product of many factors. The most powerful single cause of indiscipline in a mixed school and which is peculiar to it is that arising from aberrant sex behaviour. To put it bluntly, co-education arouses sex emotions "which

* *The Statesman*, March 7, 1966.



it does not intend should be satisfied ". I have already spoken of Nature's demands. It is common knowledge that at a certain age, sex attraction becomes an irresistible phenomenon. To say that a bi-sexual school scores over a single-sex school because by eliminating the barrack-type life to which a single-sex boarding school is committed and providing healthy opportunities for students of one sex meeting those of the other sex in the friendly intercourse of every day life, it serves to sublimate the sex the urge and divert it into creative activities of a higher order, appears to be an over-simplification. I have already quoted (at the beginning of this chapter) from the experience of co-educators like B. A. Howard who have borne testimony to the fact that even coarseness of language (in which boys of segregated schools show a high degree of proficiency) are seldom met with in a co-educational school while sex tensions or sexual troubles of a seriously unhealthy nature are practically unknown.

All this seems to be an over-simplification of the elemental nature of the primary urges. We can control them but not deny them. In Western societies, men and women do not live in secluded *āśramas*; they meet each other in the perfectly normal intercourse of every day life; they have a thousand and one opportunities of meeting each other over a cup of tea, on the dance floor, in public halls, at concerts, at art exhibitions, theatres, cinemas and where not. In such a society, a co-educational school may find it easy to justify its existence. Yet aberrant sex behaviour, sex crimes, juvenile delinquency, and what is most disquieting, a general tolerance of moral laxity, figure as ugly signposts to a misuse of freedom; such care-free deviations from accepted moral standards are relatively infrequent in traditional societies where social norms are strongly entrenched under a vigilant public opinion which does not favour free and uncontrolled mixing of the sexes during adolescence and would like to provide for the natural fulfilment of the sex-urge through marriage at a relatively early age. It is rather the impact of Western civilization that has led to a deviation from traditional values. I am speaking here of values and practices in relation to sex. No one has the right to claim any axiomatic superiority of traditional values in every field of human relations. But in matters relating to sex, India would prefer some re-thinking by Western advocates of co-education so far as the virtues and vices of the



segregated schools are concerned. In England, for instance, co-education has been accepted on practical considerations or as the result of local enterprise, not on moral grounds. The same has been the case in India, in limited areas, in recent years. The point that is urged here is that the moral standards of our young people are a reflection of our social standards, active or passive, vigilant or tolerant, not the virtue of a particular type of education or the vice of another. It is only to be hoped that a vigilant eye should continue to keep the well-earned reputation of the co-educational schools at its high level and to set an example to others of its kind.

III

Should there be Co-education in India ?

In a previous section, (Section II), I have discussed the present position of co-education in India and pointed out that, by and large, co-education has not received public approval so far as secondary education is concerned. There is, of course, co-education in primary schools. There are also single sex elementary schools. In the colleges, till recently, the policy was to have separate colleges for men and for women students. But as female education began to spread rapidly, girls coming out of the (segregated) secondary schools could not all be accommodated in the few women's colleges that had been set up and there was a large unsatisfied demand for higher education which had to be met. Among the private colleges in Calcutta, the Scottish Churches College in West Bengal was the first to admit women students to the day classes in a pioneering co-educational effort. Other private Colleges, started opening Women's Departments, separate from those of the men students. This was generally done by opening a morning shift exclusively for women. These could not strictly be called *co-educational* colleges according to the definition we have accepted, but *dual* colleges. In the countryside, the lack of opportunities of higher education for women is still more glaring. To meet this situation and with the approval of the local people, the colleges "sponsored" by the Government of West



Bengal have been thrown open equally to men and women students. These were co-educational except for the fact that the staffs of these Colleges were almost exclusively composed of men. Public opinion is not, however, consistent enough to agree to the admission of men students to women's colleges. Thus, in the district of Hugli, in West Bengal, the Hugli College, originally meant for men, has become co-educational while the Hugli Women's College, a Sponsored College, continues to be a single-sex college in spite of the fact that the seats in the Hugli College are limited. In Calcutta, the Presidency College which for a long time had resisted the invasion of the fair sex and continued to be a male preserve had to yield to popular pressure after about 100 years of its existence, while the two women's colleges in Calcutta run by the Government are still carrying on behind a sort of *purdah*, though one of them is associated with the name of an Englishman and the other with that of an English lady. One of the private colleges in Calcutta which started as a co-educational institution has now split up into two, a men's College and a women's College, though under the same management, a member of teachers being common to both the colleges. Now all these instances show, as has already been explained, that considerations of economy and convenience, rather than any definite theory, have prompted co-education. Like the British Board of Education, the Government Departments of Education in the States of India as well as the Union Ministry of Education, have not made any official declaration of policy in favour of co-education, as the better type of the two.

Education at the University stage in India has been co-educational, though at one time women were not admitted to the University entrance examination. Co-education at the Universities has by necessity passed through certain interesting stages. In the early years of the Dacca University (now in East Pakistan), though there was co-education, women students were told to keep to their own common rooms until called by the teacher himself to follow him to the class. When women started joining the University post-graduate classes in Calcutta they also used to be called to the class, but by an attendant, when the lecturer entered his class, and then left in a group immediately after he had finished his class and left the room. That is, they would go back to their own common room to be called again for the next class. That was the sort of "co-education" that prevailed

in those days, forty years ago. Now, of course, women students in the University Colleges do not wait to be called. When the classes are consecutive they do not bother even go to their common room to wait for the next professor to take the class. They would just stay on in a mood of natural relaxation, some reclining against the high bench behind, ready for the proverbial "forty winks", others bending forward, still others engaged in animated conversation in groups, quite oblivious of the presence of a lot of males near about. The men students are also their usual natural selves, talking, relaxing, joking with each other and so on. A few on either side may be seen together, in pairs, or in groups, without any trace of constraint. In joint collegiate functions, women students freely participate with their male class mates. But there is as yet one snag. Women students still occupy separate benches. This, however, looks more like a concession to custom than to any segregationist feelings. Or am I wrong ?

To confirm my own impressions, I consulted one of my former girl students. What she said was this : There are generally two groups of girls : those who have come from segregated (or single-sex) schools and those who come from mixed or co-educational schools. The first group are usually a shy lot, a little rigid in their attitude towards men students, not speaking to them unless spoken to, and generally keeping the company of other girl friends. The co-ed's, on the other hand, are relatively more free and do not stand on ceremony. A few of them may be quite "forward" in their behaviour with the male students, talking with them on equal terms, often getting the better of them. My student, who came from a co-educational school herself, belonged to the latter category and, as far as one could see, suffered from no complexes. Her own experience and that of her class was that the men students were quite well-behaved and decent, certainly no "eve-teasers". There was no suggestion of "sex" in their approach or attitude.

Since my student had come from a co-educational school, I asked her about her experience about co-education in her school. She was a student of a Higher Secondary School in Calcutta (not a place where co-education in (secondary) school is favoured) and studied from the lowest to the highest class in her school. She had a very good impression of her fellow boy-students. Hers was a small class and

the boys and girls " were like brothers and sisters ". They had even camped out together under the supervision of a male teacher and had a thoroughly enjoyable trip. There was not a single case of unseemly behaviour. That had been her experience throughout.

But, then, she continued, her experience at Bombay where she had many friends was different. She wished she could give as clean a certificate to the Bombay boys as she gave to her Calcutta class mates. Bombay has co-education in her secondary schools. But there is a good deal of sex among the Bombay co-eds. Are the Bombay girls, I asked, as forward as are depicted in some of the lurid films put out by the Bombay studios ? " No, Sir ", she said smiling. " The pictures ", she said, " give an exaggerated version ; perhaps they try to imitate Hollywood. But still, the Bombay boys ; and the girls too, were not always quite decent in their behaviour ". These statements, I must add, were not cross-checked with other evidence, and I must leave it at that.

It is society, we then conclude, which sets the form and pace of co-education. India's attitude is still in the experimental stage. The University Education Commission (1948) devoted only one page out of 593 pages of its Report to co-education. " There seems to be ", the Commission wrote, " a definite preponderance of opinion that from the thirteenth or fourteenth year of age until about the eighteenth, separate schools for boys and girls are desirable ", but at the same time the Commission added that " it was not clear whether this opinion was based on custom or upon experience ". The Report, however, quotes the opinion of " one of India's prominent educators " who, after referring to the fact that the modern trend was for equality of opportunity for women in all spheres, stated that there " should be no distinctions of any kind of women from men, after the matriculation stage ". Though this seems at first sight to be an argument oriented towards a theory of co-education, it must be noted that the educator concerned referred to the post-matriculation, or collegiate stage of education. Even in regard to this limited or cautious view of the permissibility of co-education, the majority of opinion expressed before the Commission favoured separate colleges for women " when that was feasible ", though not to the extent of denying women educational opportunity by excluding them from existing colleges organised primarily for men.

The Commission itself recommended that since it had suggested 18 to be the approximate age of entry to degree colleges, "college education *may be* (italics mine) co-educational". That the Commission also avoided laying down a theory, and took its stand on expediency and economy, is clear from its assertion that : " To maintain separate institutions for men and women side by side, duplicating equipment, even when it is very inadequate, would be an undue tax upon limited financial resources. Separate women's colleges commonly have poorer buildings, poorer equipment and less able teachers." But the Commission laid down the dictum that " where new colleges are established to serve both men and women students, *they should be truly co-educational institutions*, with as much thought and consideration given to the life needs of women as to those of men" (italics mine), and that except as such colleges come into existence " there are no valid criteria for comparing segregated education with co-education". Meanwhile, the Commission suggested, there should be " intelligent educational guidance, by qualified men and women to get a clearer view of their (women's) educational interests". Women were warned not to imitate men but to desire " as good an education as women as men get as men". This means that though their education might (as they should) have many things in common, they should not be identical in all respects. It would have been useful if the Commission which had not only one of the most distinguished educationists that India has ever produced as Chairman but included many other distinguished educationists, some with international experience and reputation (including British and American experts) had indicated a typical curriculum for women to be provided by a co-educational college. Should not the same curriculum, meant equally for boys and girls, but with a larger choice of subjects (options) meet the same purpose ?

All this concerns collegiate education. What about our schools ? For the real test of co-education lies with the secondary (including higher secondary) schools for there lies the seed bed of our anxieties and hesitation. Yet, if my student's impression, referred to in the preceding section, is a representative sample—I have not been able to secure corroboration from other sources though, knowing her as I do, I have no hesitation in accepting her estimate at its face value—we must admit that India is not yet ready for co-education at the secon-



dary stage ; and in the context of existing circumstances, it need not cause any regret. The history of education shows that there have been many significant educational experiments in the past which, in spite of their strong theoretical base, have not survived because of social indifference and unpreparedness. In India, too, it would be unwise to force a step lest it should be followed by undesirable reactions and a set-back. For in forcing the issue we shall be raising many more social problems in trying to solve the riddle of " co-education through the years". At present, due to the rapid spread of women's education in India, there is an increasing number of women teachers, graduates, trained and others, available for an expanding number of women's institutions in the sphere of secondary education. As for colleges and universities, there need be no objection at all to co-education ; but it is time that there should be a greater willingness to entertain the services of women of requisite qualifications (including research qualifications) for teaching posts in colleges and universities and such appointments should not be restricted to women's institutions alone. After an equitable balance is reached, the teaching faculties of all institutions, whether meant for men or women students, and certainly of the co-educational institutions, should be thrown open equally to all teachers, irrespective of sex, the only consideration being merit and competence.



CHAPTER XXI

EXAMINATIONS

Introduction

"The study of examinations", as Dr. H. J. Taylor observes in his introduction to "Three Studies in Examination Technique" (University Grants Commission, 1963), "is a recognised part of educational research". A great deal of thought has been, and is being, given to the reform of the present conventional system of examinations by academic circles in different parts of the world. In India, too, there has been a steady stream of research publications on the subject. The present conventional type of examinations has also come under criticism from different quarters.¹ The general feeling today is that the existing system suffers from serious drawbacks all along the line from the Secondary up to the University (post-graduate) stage, and, as present assessment goes, has failed to be an adequate instrument of measuring academic performance. The type of examinations that has come under the severest fire is known as the "Essay Type". Several studies have been made in Britain as well as in the United States which amply demonstrate the failings, the unreliability, of the essay type of examination as an instrument of rating the merits of the candidates concerned. In India, the University Education Commission (1948-49) devoted a whole chapter to the question of examinations and commented on the drawbacks of the essay type. These studies bring to light the serious shortcomings of the Essay type of questions and emphasise the need for finding an alternative to the present system that will more adequately fulfil the acknowledged objectives of a proper examination system.

¹ For a Statistician's evaluation of the conventional examination system, see P. K. Bose : "Are Examinations World Wide : A Statistical Evaluation", in *Science and Culture*, October, 1965.



Before, however, we can make a comparative estimate of the present system, it would be useful if we first discuss what an examination stands for.

II

Objectives of Examinations

The U.G.C. Committee on *Indian Examinations Reform Project* poses two basic questions :

- (1) *What are we examining for ?*
- (2) *What are the objectives involved in the entire process of higher education and how far have examinations to take note of them ?*

The point of these questions, as the Committee puts it, is that the problem of examinational reform is "inextricably bound up with broader educational issues like those of the nature and purpose of our educational programmes". In the words of the Committee—

"Viewed properly, examinations are not a sudden doomsday visitation but the natural fruition and fulfilment of a long period of educational preparation and growth. Education is a process of bringing about certain 'behavioural' changes in desirable directions in the pupils who go through it. What are these desirable directions of change ? What are the changes that we wish to bring about in our pupils ? What are the objectives to the achievement of which the entire process of education is geared ? A clear statement of objectives is, therefore, the main criterion by which the validity of our examinations should be judged."

In other words, the purport of education is seen not merely in the etymological sense of drawing out the capacities of an individual, of developing his faculties so as to prepare him for the battle of life or to train him to be a useful member of the society, but also in the more practical sense of laying down, for the guidance of the teacher, the "course objectives" in respect of the subject matter he is called upon to teach and to construct "achievement tests" for his pupils on that basis. It is the nature of the course-objectives that would obviously determine the achievement tests to be constructed. The test construction should also include, as Ralph Tylor, quoted in the U.G.C. report, suggests, a collection of "situations" in which students will be expected to reveal whether they have achieved each one of the objectives. For example, if the objective is the measurement of information which a student is expected to possess, "a

paper-and-pencil " examination would suffice. If, on the other hand, the objective is the development of skill, say, in the use of a scientific instrument or a tool of analysis, the student should be able to show not only the knowledge of what the instrument (or tool) is designed for but skill in handling the same for the purpose for which it is required. This requires a different set-up. Again, if the objective is to test the student's ability to draw inferences from facts, it is, in that case, intended to be the test of reason and intelligence, and not of memory. For example, the situation—a certain set of facts—may be set out in the question paper and the student asked to set down his inferences.

It is difficult to list all the objectives of the different kinds of courses in detail. Ralph Tylor lists the following major types of course objectives :

- Type ' A ' : *Information*, which includes terminology, specific facts and general principles.
- Type ' B ' : *Reasoning*, or *Scientific Method*, which includes induction, testing, hypothesis and deduction.
- Type ' C ' : *Location of Relevant Data*, which includes a knowledge of sources of usable data and skill in getting information from appropriate sources.
- Type ' D ' : *Skills Characteristic of Particular Subjects*, which includes laboratory skills in the sciences, language skills and the like.
- Type ' E ' : *Standards of Technical Performance*, which includes the knowledge of appropriate standards, ability to evaluate the relative importance of several standards which apply, and skills and habits in applying these standards.
- Type ' F ' : *Reports*, which includes the necessary skill in reporting projects in engineering or reporting experiments in science and the like.
- Type ' G ' : *Consistency in Application of Point of View*, which is most important in Courses in Philosophy.
- Type ' H ' : *Character*, which is perhaps the most inclusive, involving many specific factors.

Of these types, I would place character in the forefront. The chief aim of education, besides the development of necessary skills, is to build up character, and to develop personality in all its aspects. The man with the right type of education will be known by his capacity for leadership, by his ability to distinguish right from wrong, by his devotion to the highest standards of judgment and reason. All these are the necessary ingredients of character.



The U.G.C. Committee on the *Indian Examinations Reform Project* rightly lays a good deal of emphasis on the importance of a correct system of examinations. "We can have valid examinations only on the basis of a definition and specification of these objectives", he says, and proceeds :

"Examinations are nothing more than a systematic gathering of evidence regarding the extent to which 'behavioural' changes envisaged in our curricula and teaching process, have actually occurred in a given set of students. A clear statement of objectives is, therefore, the main criterion by which the validity of our examinations should be judged. Otherwise examinations will be purely arbitrary and external to the educational process. They will tend to become stereotyped, traditional and mechanical rituals instead of being productive and creative experiences. When they are not geared to well-defined objectives, they tend to be tied down to a dull and narrow routine, a fixed and rigid pattern that is not sufficiently sensitive to the rich and diverse growth which is education. An explicit definition of objectives not only gives direction to learning and training experiences, but is quite integral to the very meaning and validity of examinations."?

What happens now justifies the warning given in the U.G.C. Report. Our educational system is tending more and more to be *examination-oriented* and stereotyped in the conventional sense. All the objectives that can be thought of as the motivating forces of education appear to have dissolved into but one objective, that of somehow passing the examination. This affects teaching methods and the process of learning. The teacher has, at the back of his mind, questions of the conventional type, and therefore somewhat predictable—let us say, amenable to "intelligent guessing"—that are likely to be set at the end-of-the-course examination and he selects his materials, not as forming part of an integrated course with reference to the objectives that such a course is intended to fulfil, but with an eye to their importance as likely topics on which questions might be asked. This has resulted in a chain reaction of a kind that tends to defeat the entire purpose of education. The real objectives are lost sight of, or ignored. The teacher suggests, if not clearly, at least in a vague "if-you-understand-what-I-mean" sort of way, that certain parts of the syllabus are 'not important', 'not-so-important', or are 'important', and the examinee promptly takes

? U. G. C. Report on *Indian Examinations Reform Project*, pp. 9-10.



the cue and tries to sort out the "common questions", pesters the teachers or other sources likely to be helpful, for more definite 'hints' or 'suggestions'—even to the point of the exact phrasing of the likely questions; while the note-makers as well as publishers of help-books, cram books, 'one-day preparation' series, ready-made 'questions-and-answers' and so on come forward with alacrity to exploit the commercial possibilities of the situation; sometimes even the paper-setters and the examiners are indirectly caught in this vicious circle. The paper-setter is warned against setting questions that might involve a deviation from the usual 'standards'. In fact, in many universities, instructions are actually issued to the paper-setters not to deviate from what is called the *usual standard* of questions. What these standards are is anybody's guess. What weighs on the university authorities is that no questions should be set that might infuriate the candidates, or a sizable section of them. The 'moderators', in particular, should help. As a majority of the candidates are of that particular variety that come to the examination hall fed on hints and suggestions (with answers got by heart), it is this class that are potential trouble-shooters and it is this class, therefore, that may be regarded as a sort of play-back 'standard-bearers'; examiners, on their part, are reluctant to fail candidates and wear a guilty look if they have to. On top of that, the Chairman of the Board of Examiners thinks nothing of awarding an unscheduled 2, 3, 4, or even 5 marks by way of 'grace' to pass a candidate irrespective of the merits of his performance. If, even with these acts of misplaced compassion, a fair proportion of candidates still fail, University authorities may be under further pressure to sanction special grace marks to push up the aggregate pass rate. Thus if the original pass rate is only 30 per cent. (in spite of all the acts of compassion shown by the examiner and the head examiner), attempt may be made by awarding compensatory grace marks (on an *ad hoc* and uniform basis) to push up the aggregate percentage of pass as nearly as possible to 50 per cent. which is supposed to be fair enough to meet the ends of justice. And, I dare say, most of the candidates who are thus made to pass would go out, after their forced graduation, to serve as teachers in schools, some even in colleges. Naturally, they would take with them their own 'standards' of learning (or not learning) a subject.



What I have described as an examination-oriented system of education, the Radhakrishnan Commission condemns as the "pernicious domination" of examinations over the whole system of education in India. The Commission points out that the deficiencies and harmful consequences of "this most pervasive evil" have been analysed and set out clearly by successive Universities Commissions since 1902, by a Government Resolution as far back as 1904 and, more recently, by a Committee of the Central Advisory Board of Education. The problem posed by the large number of candidates which, with the expansion of education, assumes more and more alarming proportions adds to the dimensions of the evil.

III

Essay-Type Examination

The conventional type of examinations is known generally as the "Essay Type". The questions usually start with such words as "Describe", "Discuss", "Examine", "Explain", "Elucidate", "Compare and Contrast" and the like. The student has, in effect, to write something like an essay on the subject matter of the question, running into several pages. He is, of course, given a liberal choice of questions of which he has to answer four, five or six. Naturally these four, five or six questions cannot cover the entire contents of the course. This gives rise to the principle of selectivity. The students are encouraged to concentrate on a portion of the course instead of covering the whole of the course content. They, in fact, feel themselves free to omit even whole books, not to speak of whole chapters. The practice indulged in by some teachers, many of whom are also examiners, of giving "suggestions" also limits the field of the candidate's preparation for the examinations. Where such suggestions are not forthcoming, students would turn to bazar notes or cram books, but seldom to the text books.

The Radhakrishnan Commission lists the major defects of the essay type of examinations in the following words :

- (i) It has usually no clearly defined purpose ; it is, therefore, invalid.
- (ii) Its sampling is very arbitrary and limited ; it is inadequate.
- (iii) Its scoring is subjective and, therefore, not reliable.



The last point will be presently taken up for discussion. The Commission, it is to be noted, has pointed out that where the emphasis is on thought, acute reasoning, critical exposition, creative interpretation and other types of mental effort in relation to the materials of the course, the essay type of questions would be an appropriate test. If it is used in conjunction with more objective techniques it may be used to great advantage. What is required is that the exact purpose of the examination must be understood by the paper-setter, the examiner and the students. Care should accordingly be taken in the selection of test content, in the framing of the questions and in the scoring of results.³

As it is, and by itself, the essay type of questions may not be able to satisfy the basic conditions of a good test. It may be recalled in this connection that the University of Calcutta issues the following instructions to the question-setter for the degree examinations :

"The questions in each paper should be fairly and uniformly distributed over the whole course covered by that paper and should conform to the Regulations laid down for the particular examinations ; there should not be any marked change of standard from year to year, but it is not required that the same type of questions should be set every year....

"Maintaining the standard, the questions should be simple, direct and worded clearly and unequivocally so that the candidates may have no difficulty in appreciating the scope and purport of the questions....

"The number of questions to be set and the marks assigned should be adjusted according to the nature and weightage of the questions set....

"Questions should be framed in such a way as to test the student's intelligent grasp of broad principles and his power of intelligent presentation in literary subjects. Questions should also aim at encouraging good methods of work and teaching and discouraging unintelligent memorizing and submission of ready-made answers found in note books."

It is also laid down that the candidates " shall give their answers in their own words as far as practicable", and that examiners shall allow some choice of questions. However, these instructions themselves provide loopholes for deviation from the general purpose of the instructions. The examiner, for instance, will have to exercise his own judgment as to what is implied, in concrete terms, in respect of the test content, by such phrases as "intelligent grasp", "intelligent

³ The University Education Commission Report, p. 336.



presentation", "as far as practicable" etc. In other words, the subjective element in the evaluation of answer papers is allowed sufficient scope to vitiate the instructions.

In a paper presented to (and since published by) the University Grants Commission, H. J. Taylor, then Vice-Chancellor of the Gauhati University, tabulates the results of certain investigations he carried out in regard to the marking of the answer papers in a number of subjects of some 45 candidates presented by a certain College at the Pre-University Examination of 1962. The paper is captioned "An Examination of Examiners". The subjects involved were English (2 papers), Alternative English, Economics, History, Logic and Mathematics. All these scripts had two examiners in each subject except in History in which there were three. The object was to learn something about the range of uncertainty in the examiners' estimates of the answer scripts. Taylor writes : "Every care was taken to satisfy the necessary conditions for a reliable experiment. Each packet of scripts from the examination hall was thoroughly shuffled, and then re-numbered serially. The original numbers were detached. The scripts supplied to the examiner were thus anonymous and in random order. Examiners were instructed to enter their marks on separate sheets, and to write nothing of any kind on the scripts, so that the second examiner had no indication of the marks given by the first. Examiners were asked to preserve privacy and to avoid all discussion with one another." The results were then subjected to a detailed analysis to disclose the variations in the marking of the scripts. The analysis made several interesting and significant revelations. Without going into the details of this analysis, it would be sufficient for our purpose if we refer to the following findings. Let the two examiners be called *A* and *B*.

(i) In English, Paper I, examiner *A* fails 8 candidates while *B* fails none. In English, Paper II, examiner *A* again fails 8, *B* fails 5, but only 2 candidates are failed by both *A* and *B*. In Economics, *A* fails 6, *B* fails 14. In History (in which there were three examiners, *A*, *B* and *C*), examiner *A* fails only 4 while *B* fails 11 and *C* fails 7.

¹ Taylor : *Three Studies in Examination Technique* (U.G.C., 1963), p. 4.

(ii) As regards differences in the marking of scripts as between the two examiners, the experiment included 290 comparisons. The smallest difference was zero, which occurred 14 times and the largest 33. The fact that mean differences were approximately the same for all subjects led Taylor to treat the 290 differences as a single group which were summarised as follows :

TABLE

<i>Mark difference</i>	<i>No. of scripts</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
5 or larger	201	69
10 or larger	95	33
15 or larger	25	86
20 or larger	4	1.4

(iii) On the basis of three separate tabulations viz., (a) taking the lowest estimate for each script, (b) taking the average estimate and (c) taking the highest estimate and working out the results strictly according to University rules, the following results are arrived at :

TABLE

	<i>Low marking</i>	<i>Average marking</i>	<i>High marking</i>
Passed in			
Div. I	0	1	4
Div. II	3	4	5
Div. III	14	17	22
Failures	28	23	14
Pass Percentage	38	49	69
Average total mark	222	242	260
			(max.—600)

The difference between high and low marking ranges from 72 to 12, with an average of 38.

(N.B. Taylor adds : "The examiners were all competent examiners, and under the conditions of the experiment, the marking was probably more reliable than the ordinary run of University marking.")

(iv) A single examiner shows considerable change in his standard of marking as he works through the scripts. In English, Paper I, examiner A shows a variation of standard from 33.8 to 40.2, "much



larger than can be attributed to chance". In English Paper II, the same examiner varies by as much as 10 marks. Large variations in standard of marking seem to be the rule rather than the exception. Taylor estimates that uncertainties from this source alone may easily amount to 10 marks or more. In fact, from a study of the marks-differences (point *iii* above), he deduces that when an examiner assigns a mark to a script there is a 50% chance that his error is greater than 5. The standard error of a mark, he thinks, is not less than 7. These conclusions have an important bearing, he says, on the evaluation of examination marks, on the fate of hundreds of candidates.

The significance of this statistical analysis cannot be missed. The investigation concerned the performance of 45 candidates only. Where the number of candidates at an examination runs into thousands and the examiner has to value the scripts in greater hurry due to the time limit—sometimes he may have to work through 20 to 30 scripts a day towards the closing stages of the period allowed—the extent to which the results may be vitiated due to the subjective factor may better be left to the imagination. The drastic conclusion to which Taylor arrives, *viz.*, that "an examination mark has neither the sanctity nor the precision usually attached to it" is not an over-statement; also that "it is a very risky matter to depend entirely on the judgment of one examiner".

A more recent study by Professor P. K. Bose of the Department of Statistics, Calcutta University, and now its Pro-Vice-Chancellor, is significantly entitled, "Are Examinations worth while?"⁵ While the Professor does not himself answer this question directly he has presented a statistical evaluation of examinations as achievement tests, leaving it to "the administrators and educationists" to decide the issue. It will be interesting to follow his findings.

Taylor, as we have seen, falls foul of the examiners and their faulty methods of assessment showing large deviations in marking the same question. Bose also produces evidence, on the basis of larger samples, to support Taylor's conclusions. He (Bose), however rightly points out that an examination system as a whole is

⁵ P. K. Bose : *Are Examinations Worth While : A Statistical Evaluation*, paper in *Science and Culture*, October, 1965.

dependent on the (a) syllabus and curriculum, (b) mode of teaching, (c) structure of the question paper and (d) method of assessment. We have already pointed out how in an examination-oriented system, the mode of teaching tends to be governed by the question-answer manner of approach. The syllabus and the curriculum also, as every experienced teacher caught in the vicious system is well aware, are often by-passed or mutilated in an attempt to simplify and scale it down to a few stock questions relating to each topic of the syllabus. For instance, in a certain Mathematics paper set for the School Final Examination, Bose, after examining a random sample of 3717 answer scripts, found that "the tabulated results reveal that in order to pass or even to secure moderately good marks, knowledge of Mathematics up to Class VIII is quite sufficient". One reason for this, Bose found, was that "the paper was very easy, all but very dull candidates have passed the examination": also that "the examination does not so much measure mathematical ability as it puts a premium on ordinary mechanical drilling". About the relation of the question paper to the syllabus for the School Final examination, Bose had no hesitation in recording that the paper on Mathematics was "not suitable for School Final examination".

Thus, in an examination system, the structure of the question paper is of as much importance in maintaining the standard of an examination as the differences in the methods of assessment followed by individual examiners. Bose, therefore, recommends that a question paper should be properly standardised if it is to serve its purpose. In other words, it must satisfy what the statisticians call the (i) test of consistency, (ii) test of efficiency and (iii) test of sufficiency. He thus summarises the meaning of these tests :

A test is said to be consistent when its co-efficient of reliability and validity are high ; it is said to be efficient when it contains items of varying discriminating powers and it is said to be sufficient when the item-test correlation coefficients are positive and high. By reliable I mean that the test or its parallel form shall reproduce similar score structure at different periods when applied on the same group of individuals ; by valid I mean that the test is capable of predicting a criterion variable with accuracy.

Apart from these tests of standardisation of the question paper, the method of assessment of answers is also not conducive to the correct determination of the achievement of a candidate. At present, candidates are arranged in order of merit by adding together their

scores in different subjects. This method suffers from serious drawbacks in so far as it does not take account of, as Bose points out, the intrinsic differences between the subjects, differences in aptitudes of candidates in different subjects, differences in standards of examination in different subjects and random fluctuations. The remedy is to replace the actual scores, called "raw scores", by "equivalent scores". Thus 30 marks obtained in a paper on Mathematics cannot measure the same standard of achievement as 30 marks in English. A candidate can even score full marks (100%) in Mathematics : while even the best candidate cannot do that in English. In any comparative assessment of the standard of performance in the two subjects, it is necessary either to scale down the marks obtained in Mathematics or scale up the marks in English according to a statistical method of determining the equivalent scale as compared to the raw score. It is interesting to find that calculated on this basis, the following results were obtained by Bose in the cases of 8 candidates examined in six different subjects (Vernacular, Classical Language, History, Mathematics, English and Geography).

TABLE I

Raw Score

	V.	CL.	H.	M.	E.	G.	Total	Rank
1.	58	60	83	88	56	62	437	1
2.	66	71	55	84	57	74	407	2
3.	62	81	55	72	62	70	402	3
4.	60	80	48	80	62	72	402	3
5.	62	58	58	82	68	74	402	3
6.	64	76	60	61	62	70	393	4
7.	67	58	64	58	67	74	388	5
8.	61	71	44	80	62	70	388	5

TABLE II

Equivalent Score

1.	58	58	73	72	62	55	378	6
2.	66	65	58	70	63	65	387	1
3.	62	72	58	64	68	60	384	3
4.	60	71	53	67	68	63	382	4
5.	62	57	59	69	73	65	385	2
6.	64	69	60	59	68	60	380	5
7.	67	57	63	56	72	65	380	5
8.	61	65	50	67	68	60	371	7

It will be seen that as the result of equivalence, the candidate who held the *first position* in Table I (in the original evaluation) has dropped to the *last position but one* in Table II, while one of the three who held the third position in Table I has risen to the second rank in Table II.

There are also elaborate methods of determining how far examiners in awarding marks have deviated from mean or standard deviations. This is necessary for the standardisation of evaluation, and for weeding out erratic examiners. Prof. A. George in her "Report on Study on Assessment of Standard of Valuation and Comparative Performance of Colleges in Pre-University Examination (1964)" quoted by Bose, has suggested that photostat copies of a sample of answer-scripts taken at random in a particular subject be given for evaluation to all the examiners to be considered for selection in the subject, that these scripts be independently examined by each examiner, that the standard of valuation of individual examiners be then compared with the average standard of all the examiners in each subject and that the examiners be selected on the basis of their performance. This, she expected, would help maintain "a reasonable uniformity in the standard of evaluation".

It will be seen from these studies that the essay-type of questions is particularly vulnerable to the deficiencies discussed above. It is, however, doubtful whether the elaborate processes of calculation suggested by Taylor, Bose and others, can be effectively applied to such large-scale examinations as are conducted by the bigger Universities of India. An attempt may, perhaps, be made with the Honours and post-graduate examinations so that at least the better type of students may not unduly suffer from the errors of individual examiners. The calculations may possibly be mechanically processed. But for the large majority of students, and for rectifying some of the inherent defects of the essay type of questions, our efforts should be to modify the existing system so as to make it better fulfil the true objectives of an examination, or to find a suitable alternative.

It is now obvious why the Radhakrishnan Commission, in fact, all experienced educationists, look so critically at the present system of examinations. What the Commission has omitted to add is that this type of examinations also facilitates all sorts of malpractices within as well as outside the examination hall.

Objective Testing

A new type of examinations is thus called for. The answer to this search is some form of objective testing. By and large, this is an American phenomenon. After the recent visit to India (1950) of Dr. Benjamin S. Bloom, Professor of Education and Head of the Department of Examinations of the Chicago University, who had come to this country on the invitation of the Ministry of Education, Government of India, to help them in the work of evaluation in secondary education and organised four regional "workshops" on evaluation for University teachers (at Osmania, Poona, Patna and Aligarh), the interest of this country in the reform of the examination system has been aroused at all levels resulting in a widespread awareness of the problem and in an effort to identify the issues posed by it. One of these issues is that of the replacement of the essay-type of questions by the objective type.

As the Radhakrishnan Commission observes : "A good examination should satisfy certain essential conditions. It should, in the first place, have validity. It should be able to measure what it seeks to measure. The purpose of the examination must be clear and explicit. It must be reliable ; it must efficiently measure that it does measure. It must be adequate ; it should sample sufficiently widely, so that the resulting scores are representative of relative total performance in the areas measured. *It should be objective ; it should effectively eliminate the bias or subjective opinion of the person who marks it.* It should be easy to administer, easy to mark, easy to interpret." The Commission then proceeds to list the advantages of objective testing as follows :

- (i) The success of students in the College or University can be more reliably predicted by objective tests than by any other type of admission examination.
- (ii) The objective test makes a wide range of questions possible. As the student has only to make a mark, write a number, a letter,

^a University Education Commission Report, Vol. I, p. 328. (Italics are mine.)

or a few words, fifty to one hundred items can be answered in an hour's time.

(iii) By eliminating all personal whim and fancy, mood of the moment, or widely varying standards of expectancy among the examiners, the objective tests are immune from errors due to the subjectivity of scoring. An objective test can be scored repeatedly by the same person without variation of the score or by a number of persons without any disagreement on the score.

(iv) No errors or irrelevant factors can enter into the result. There is only one variable involved, namely, whether the answer is correct or incorrect.

(v) Time in marking is negligible compared to the long and laborious process of reading and marking the written type essay examinations. Thousands of students can be examined one day and the scores or marks completed the next, sparing students the strain of long waiting for results.⁷

Objective testing is not one uniform system to be applied indiscriminately to all situations. There are several types of such testing. Thus the "quiz" type of questions can be set on any given course in a class, once a week or fortnight, consisting of short questions demanding pointed answers, testing a student's grasp of his texts or his subject. This type of test would be very suitable for tutorial classes, where the time is short and the teacher finds the burden of correcting heaps of exercises (of the essay type) a time-consuming and irksome process. A quiz test lends itself particularly to oral treatment and as such the alertness of a candidate as well as his knowledge and intelligence can be tested with particular reference to the course objectives. This type of test is specially useful for general knowledge testing. An objective test may, secondly, take the form of "true-false" questions. This, together with the "multiple choice" questions of the recognition type, is, I understand, widely in vogue in the secondary education system of the United States. I have come across several interesting specimens of such testing, for example, in the excellent Bulletins in the "Class Room Testing" series published by the Bureau of Institutional Research

⁷ *Op cit.*, p. 334.



of the University of Minnesota. In the true-false type of questions, the object is to test the student's knowledge of specific facts. In the opinion of some educators, true-false tests provide the best methods for extensive sampling of course content. For example, for a one-hour test, a true-false test can have as many as 100-125 items. However, to be effective, such tests must be carefully constructed. For example, where a statement as a whole is to be marked True (T) or False (F), it must not contain separate assertions, one of which may be true, the other false, and the student may unwarily fix his attention on one rather than the other. In other words, the true-false item should be stated clearly and specifically so that the student may be able to understand exactly what the statement means and he may make his decision accordingly. Thus, if the statement is, "Good teeth depend upon diet," the dependence may be complete or partial, for good teeth do depend on other factors as well. So, would the student mark it as "T" or "F"? On the other hand, if the statement reads : "A good diet is a basic factor in having good teeth," the student would have no hesitation in marking it as "T."* The difficulty may, however, be removed when the question is given together with a mention of the possible qualifications which are marked by, say (a), (b) and (c)—the candidate indicating the mark (a), (b) or (c) against his 'T' or 'F' to indicate the qualifications. The following kinds of statements in the framing of questions should, however, be avoided, viz. compound statement, misleading (trick) statements or double negatives. As regards "multiple-choice" tests, here the student may be given a number of alternative answers to a question, or a number of solutions to a situation, one of which is correct. This would involve the measurement of specific knowledge which an understanding of the question or the situation demands, and the ability of the student to apply this knowledge to a specific situation. This type of question may resemble a True-False type but is not really so. Under this type, questions may be framed which may involve measurement of (a) application, (b) ability to recognise assumptions, (c) comprehension and analysis, (d) ability to judge the validity of inferences, (e) analogous reasoning, (f) ability to re-

* See Bulletin on Class Room Testing, No. 5, University of Minnesota, U.S.A.

cognise define problems, (g) problem solving and (h) ability to draw valid conclusions. What is important is to fix the particular kind of testing that the examiner has in view and to frame questions accordingly. Such questions may each occupy a whole page, or even more, and the question-setter will have to exercise a good deal of ingenuity and take a lot of pains in framing the questions.

Besides the above, there are other types of objective questions, e.g. questions which demand matching, completion or re-arrangement. Matching test items provide a convenient and useful method of measuring the student's knowledge of a series of facts, principles, relationships, or interpretations. The items customarily consist of two columns : the items in column 1 provide the stimuli and the items in the column 2 serve as responses. The student is to select the one response item which is most closely related to the given stimulus item. A candidate, for instance, may be asked to match a doctrine or theory (say, the Law of Gravitation) or invention (say Penicillin), or he may be given a writing in one column, and several names (of writers), arranged in a haphazard manner, in the opposite column, and then be asked to relate the one to the other. Thus if the law of gravitation is marked (a) in column 1 and Newton is marked (c) in column 2 the student will write (c) against (a), and so on. To eliminate guessing, the response column (col. 2) should contain more terms or elements than the stimuli column (col. 1). The range of matching may include events and dates, events and places, individuals and events, individuals and quotations etc. It may even extend beyond matching of specific facts and take on a more imaginative character. For instance, the student may be asked to match causes and effects, principles and applications, conclusions and judgments, or problems and solutions.

The Report of the Seminars on Examination Reform organised in 1958 by the University Grants Commission (India) under the leadership of Dr. Bloom gives a number of illustrations of Objectives and Evaluation Techniques by means of model papers (both Essay type and the New Type) in Economics, Political Science, Psychology, History, Chemistry, Physics, Botany and Mathematics. First of all, the "Objectives" (based upon a consensus) of studying the subject concerned are set forth. Then the expected "student behaviour" in respect of each such (itemized) objectives is indicated.



This is followed by two types of questions—the Essay and the Objective (Recognition) types corresponding to the particular objective. The Objective type is usually of the 'multiple-choice' type. The questions (objective type or recognition form) may be split up into sections covering the course content relating to the objective in view.

Thus, taking the paper on Political Science as an illustration, objective no. 1 as framed in the U. G. C. Report under reference is stated to be :

"The student will acquire knowledge of fundamental political concepts and institutions and the changing role of the State."

Against this objective, and under "Student Behaviour," the student, faced with the test, is expected to (1) recognise reliable sources of information, (2) remember useful political information, (3) distinguish between new and old meanings attached to particular concepts, ideas and principles, (4) recognise particular illustrations and violations of major ideas, theories etc. and (5) explain political situations in historical perspective.

The questions are then set with reference to the particular objective and the student behaviour as itemised. The paper (with reference to Objective No. 1) is divided into three sections such as *Criterium for Evaluating Social Systems*, *Definition of Critical Terms and Means appropriate to Implementation of Goals*. Three questions are set under each of these heads, students being invited to mark the correct or the one best answer out of a number of given alternative answers (serially marked) to the question.

Then, again, take the paper on Economics. Here, for a change, I take an actual sample question. The question is set under the objective : *"The student will develop the ability to apply economic knowledge to problems of economic policy."* The student, in relation to this objective can (1) analyse the problems of economic policy, (2) recall facts, principles, laws etc. relevant (to the problems) and analyse them, (3) identify the relationships between the facts, principles etc. and the problems of economic policy in question, (4) formulate a tentative hypothesis, suggest a remedy or study a possible course of action, (5) test the hypothesised remedy or course of action in the given situation, (6) determine the sufficiency or insufficiency of the data for explaining the problem in question and (7) apply the



facts or principles chosen to explain or predict. Against these, the objective question ("recognition form") is as follows :

(QUESTION)

A leading economist asserts that a change in long run underlying conditions (wants, resources, technology) will produce a change in the long run price and/or quantity. In the following items you are to judge whether the change mentioned is of such a character, and if so, what its effects on price and quantity of a particular product will be. Assume that the industry referred to is perfectly competitive and is subject to increasing costs. Assume that the change takes place other than that mentioned in or directly implied by the statement. (Blacken answer space)

A.—if the stated change (given below) will cause *both* long-run price and quantity produced to *increase* ;

B.—if the stated change will cause *both* long-run price and quantity produced to *decrease* ;

C.—if the stated change will cause long-run *price to fall* and quantity produced to *increase* ;

D.—if the stated change will cause long-run *price to rise* and quantity produced to *decrease*.

1. Development of a new substitutes for the product ;
2. Development of a new use for the product ;
3. Monopolisation of the industry producing the product ;
4. A redistribution of the income favouring the groups to whom the product has a high marginal utility ;
5. An increase in money wage-rates in the industry producing the product ;
6. An invention increasing the productivity of labour in the industry ;
7. Discovery of a new, practical source of supply of raw materials ;
8. The product becomes less fashionable.

It is not necessary to add examples for considerations of space, except to point out that for each course objective and student behaviour, there is the essay type of questions also, but, of course the form, *ex hypothesi*, is different.

Assessment of the Essay and the Objective Types

The preceding two sections invite a comparative assessment of the two types—the Essay Type and the Objective Type—of examinations. The Radhakrishnan Commission specifically declines to create the impression that objective testing should necessarily rule out the essay type of examination altogether. The Commission,

in fact, feels that even when introduced, objective testing will have to be supplemented by the essay type of examination. The great merit of the latter type is that it is easy to prepare and administer and that it is possible to use it for practically all subjects of the curriculum. It is also superior to the objective type where the test objective is the interpretation of facts, criticism and other forms of higher mental activity. Its greatest defect is its unreliability because of the subjective element in assessment, giving rise to variations that may vitiate the results by large margins of error. This affects the pass-list which means that many students fail for wholly adventitious factors. The element of chance plays a big role in the final publication of results. The practice of awarding grace marks is a left-handed acknowledgment of this fact ; it does not, however, eliminate the defect.

(a) *Question Setting*

There are two ways in which the inadequacies of the essay type of questions may be corrected. One refers to the framing of questions, the other to the grading of answers. Even in the essay type of questions, an element of objectivity may be possible. Some questions may very well call for an understanding of well-established facts or well-known points. Some call for stereotyped answers. Some may deal with historical facts about which there need not be differences of opinion. In such cases, except where the issues themselves are not clear or are controversial or where the questions are framed in an ambiguous way, or where they call for the exercise of a high degree of critical faculty or acumen in exposition or where the excellence of an answer depends on the manner or style of presentation, the marking is not likely to show any significant variation as between one examiner and another. So far as the framing or selection of questions is concerned, there are certain do's and dont's which the paper-setter will be advised to observe. The Radhakrishnan Commission puts certain questions about the questions themselves which they invite the moderator or the paper-setter to bear in mind, namely,

1. Is the question concerned with important phases of the subject ?
2. If the question emphasises minor details, are they useful in linking up other facts, ideas, theories, involved in the subject ?

3. Does the question give emphasis to evaluation or to relational thinking ?
4. Is the question stated in such a way as to stimulate thought or challenge interest of pupils ?
5. Does the question force the pupil to integrate his ideas around certain interest centres ?
6. Is the question stated in such a form as to force the pupil to sample widely into his background of fact ?
7. Does the question call for any originality of thought organization and expression ?
8. Does the question call for the pupil to integrate facts gained from different sources ?
9. Is the question limited sufficiently that the pupil has some reasonable chance of writing what he really knows about it in a reasonable time ?

I would add two more queries to the above.

1. Is the question free from ambiguity ?
2. Do the questions exceed the scope of the test-materials (syllabus) ?

A careful scrutiny of the points involved in the queries listed above will help to remove many of the undesirable features of the essay type of questions. In other words, as the Radhakrishnan Commission observes, the exact purpose of the examination ought to be understood by both the examiner and the students. In the end, however, the Commission fails to come to a final decision and concludes rather tamely that "a conclusive verdict on the comparative advantages and disadvantages of this type is difficult to give."

(b) *Grading*

Assuming, as we have to in the present context, that the essay type of questions is going to stay for quite a while (even though it may do so, in some cases, in conjunction with the New Type), what engages our attention as next in importance is the "grading" of answers. H. J. Taylor, whose views we have already quoted, has thought a good deal on this question—how to eliminate the subjective bias in the marking of answers. In fact, Taylor's main subject of enquiry in the "Three Studies of Examination Technique," published by the University Grants Commission (1964), is : how can the conventional examination (that is, the essay type examination) be used to the best advantage ? For he believes that the conven-



tional examination, with all its faults, does give "real information." "But," he hastens to add, "we have not yet learned how to use that information" for—

"We add marks together without any reference to the scales to which those marks refer. It is as though the physicist added Fahrenheit and Centigrade temperatures, or the accountant added rupees and dollars. We allow the results to be vitiated by the most elementary arithmetical fallacies, and then set up Committees to discover why the failure rate is so high...."

A mark, he points out, is essentially a measure number. The examiner must be clear as to what exactly he is measuring when he awards a mark. The first of Taylor's three studies was carried out with the help of the corrected answer-scripts of some 45 students presented by a College in Assam at the Pre-University examination in certain subjects. In this paper, Taylor proceeds to find a tentative answer to the question—how large is the standard error (S.E.) of the average examiner? He finds that the S.E. of a mark is not less than 7. Also, as different examiners show large variations in mean and standard deviation, the marks should be "scaled" to the same mean and standard deviation—otherwise large and unpredictable errors will be introduced in the results. But the most interesting finding of his is that the requirement of passing separately in a large number of papers should be abandoned since it introduces a high probability of failure on account of examiners' errors. Failure in individual papers should be condoned, not with reference to some arbitrary principle of 'grace marks' but with reference to the S.E. in marking. "The 'true' total mark of a candidate, Taylor states, can never be known exactly but for any given set of marks we can compute the probability that this 'true' total is above the pass line. We should, therefore, pass all candidates for whom this probability reaches some specified value. Since many candidates now fail on account of examiners' errors, it is probable that the application of the principle would also result in a higher pass percentage".

The second of the three Studies by Taylor deals with the question of Supplementary Examinations. The *raison d'être* of the Supplementary Examination lies in the large percentage of failures in the original examination. The question posed is, what proportion of unsatisfactory candidates are likely to pass on account of examiners'

errors and how is the situation affected if a supplementary examination is held ? After a calculation of probabilities, Taylor gives this answer : A supplementary examination always increases the proportion of bad candidates in the pass list by a factor which is likely to lie between $1\frac{1}{2}$ and 2. For this reason, a supplementary examination further decreases the reliability of the results. It is true that many good candidates near the border line will pass if given a second chance (through a supplementary examination) but this, Taylor points out, is achieved at a heavy price. It is not good logic to pass 100 bad candidates to pass 10 good candidates through a Supplementary Test. Rather, more attention should be given to the original examination so that the S.E. of the examiners may be reduced to the minimum level.

(c) "Grace" Marks

The third study of the series is concerned with the practice of awarding "grace" marks in the conventional (essay) type of examinations. As the subject has evoked widespread controversy in recent years, it merits serious consideration. In fact, we have two parallel tendencies. On the one hand, the award of grace marks which was originally meant to be an exceptional deviation from the normal evaluation of merit has now come to be an almost regular affair. On the other hand, educationists are becoming more and more conscious of its evil influence. The occasion for giving grace marks varies from case to case. Critics should, therefore, learn to distinguish between these cases before they might feel competent to adjudge the validity of such awards. Taylor, in spite of his otherwise excellent study, has not done this.

Roughly, the following cases may be distinguished. A head examiner, for instance, may increase the marks originally awarded by an over-strict examiner, as a corrective, for maintaining uniformity of standards. An individual candidate, secondly, may be granted grace marks as, for instance, when he is short of pass mark by 1 or 2 in the aggregate, or when a candidate would be missing Honours but for 1 or 2 marks which cannot, in good conscience, be withheld. Again there may also be at the back of one's mind the lurking



suspicion about the existence of what is known as the examiner's error. This is particularly true in the case of a candidate's performance in a single paper where, as we have seen, two equally competent teachers may agree to differ substantially on a paper's true worth. As Taylor points out, if a candidate falls short by one or two marks in a single subject, but otherwise does well, it seems "unreasonable" not to pass him. Further, a grace mark is sometimes given, not really by way of grace but as a compensation for the errors or oversight of the paper-setter, the examiner or the moderator. For instance, a paper-setter might have overshot the limits of the syllabus or otherwise offended against the Regulations ; he might have made the questions unusually stiff or lengthy, and so on. On the other hand, the examiner concerned might be proved to have been unusually strict or exceptionally lenient, registering a large standard deviation (S.D.). I have known of a case where the whole lot of scripts (numbering 400 or so) in a particular paper allotted to an examiner by the Calcutta University had had to be re-valued by another examiner by special orders of the Syndicate of the University on receipt of a representation from the Chairman of the Board of Examiners in that subject stating that his evaluation of the scripts had been too erratic. There have been other such cases. Apart from such cases, there are also indirect methods of granting concessions to examinees as when, during the progress of an examination, a question (supposed to be stiff or out of syllabus in a paper) is officially substituted, or amended, or even deleted on the spot ; or the number of questions to be answered reduced. These concessions are allowed either as a compelling necessity to stop student demonstrations or to forestall such disturbances. The net effect of all these practices is the same as that of awarding "grace" marks though the reasons and therefore, its validity, differ. We cannot, therefore, include all these cases under one general sweep of condemnation.

The question of adding grace marks to the aggregate score of a candidate is specially raised by Taylor. An ordinary mark, as he says, is based on an examiner's estimate of a candidate's performance in a single paper, and this should be quite independent of his performance in the other papers. A grace mark (added to the aggregate) is based on a survey of a candidate's performance over many papers. Indeed, when the purpose of the grace

mark is to bolster up the total pass percentage in an examination, the performance of the whole lot of candidates appearing at the examination is taken into account. But the fact is, the former is awarded by an examiner, the latter by a Committee or Board.

As regards the utility of the grace mark making up for a high rate of failure, its only justification, academically, lies in the fact that it compensates for a probable S.E. in the original examination. Actually, the high failure rate may be due to many factors other than examiners' errors. Therefore, the necessity of awarding grace marks to bolster up the percentage rate of success is rather misconceived in so far as it takes note of only one kind of remedy—and the weakest one at that—and ignoring other more relevant remedies.

One of these remedies is to make the conventional system of examination, based as it is on the essay type, more responsive to the application of new techniques of testing. The effort centres round the assumption that there is a standard mark, if not 'true mark,' which can be mathematically established ; that there is a standard error in marking which can be similarly determined. It may be necessary to have a large number of markings mechanically processed to find out the true mark as well as the standard deviation, and when these are worked out, the revised marksheet would be a more or less correct measure of a candidate's performance. To make the testing effective, Taylor suggests that the practice of failing a candidate altogether due to his failing in one paper only should be given up. The aggregate is a more rational basis of judging a candidate's worth. In fact, in the first of his three studies, Dr. Taylor sets forth his opinion that the best single measure of a candidate's performance "is unquestionably his average score over a large number of papers marked independently and properly scaled". So he considers it right that the chief criterion of passing should be the attainment of a specified total. Failure in individual papers should be condoned, not with reference to some arbitrary principle of 'grace marks,' but with reference to the standard error of the marking. "The 'true' total mark of a candidate," he says, "can never be known exactly, but for any given set of marks we can compute the probability that this 'true' total is above the pass line. We should,



therefore, pass all candidates for whom this probability reaches some specified value."

(d) The Choice before Us

We must, however, take note of the fact that the main objective of an examination is to judge the qualitative performance of the candidates. It is as much a merit test as a test of which of the candidates should pass or fail. An essay type examination may, in spite of all its faults, yield a rich harvest by way of quality. It may show up an Addison, an Emerson, a Dewey. Skill we admire, but talent is even something more than skill. In this matter, perhaps, the essay type scores over the objective type, for in the objective type examination, the candidate has little scope for the display of originality. Where, either, is room for the exercise of the critical faculty? Does it, again, enable us to spot out the man of genius, the prodigy, the leader who extends his sway over the minds of men?

There will thus be general agreement with the Radhakrishnan Commission that once the inaccuracy of marking an answer-paper is removed, the essay type of examination can be fairly reliably scored, as studies conducted by Fred Kelly, John Stalnaker, V. M. Sims, and let us add, H. J. Taylor, have shown. At the same time the Commission suggests that "valid, reliable and adequate" objective examinations should be introduced in the Indian Universities. The ideal is to combine the two to admit of easier adjustment to course objectives. The examination system should synthesise the two approaches so that it may be used as an effective tool of measurement of a student's performance both in quantity and in quality.

VI

Concluding Remarks

The greatest need of the hour is to exercise the spectre of examination from the temples of learning. The examination, because of our failure to handle it properly, has assumed the proportions of an ogre, a monster darkening the horizon of young lives. This

terrible image should change. We have to make of an examination a creative experience. The question paper is a challenge, just as the cricket pitch is a challenge to a Bradman, a Hobbs or a "Ranji" or the track in an Olympic is a challenge to a Jessie Owen or a Milkha Singh. Why should our education be obsessed by the fears of the neurotic instead of being inspired by a healthy and challenging spirit of enquiry, or regarded as the gateway to a life of high adventure, self-fulfilment and self-realization ?

At present a sort of neurosis seizes most of our students on the eve of an examination. Paradoxically speaking, this is because the process of learning he has gone through in school or college has been examination-oriented. In practice, it is a sort of hit-and-run method. There seems to be only one course-objective which both the teachers and the students accept as valid, namely, that of passing the examination. This, again, means the selection of a certain number of questions and learning their answers, as far as possible, by rote. Teachers also re-arrange their reading materials with the same end in view. The curiosity of the young learner in the subject-matter of the study is seldom aroused, his grasp of fundamentals seldom tested, his intelligence seldom called into play. Naturally, if a question out of the ordinary run, or out of the "common" list, is set, it confounds the student and promptly incapacitates him. Hence his worry and anxiety, a mental condition that is almost auto-suggested. There is no reason why this should be so. There was a time, about 150 years ago, when examinations were held in an atmosphere appropriate to a festive occasion, a social event as much as an educational affair. A report in *The Statesman*, quoted by the Committee on the Indian Examinations Project gives interesting details of one of such gala occasion. The examination was a "function" to which managements of the schools concerned sent out formal invitations to the *elite* of the city. The idea was to encourage the young examinees. The candidates wore a look of self-importance and teachers radiated a "beam of joy." The guests, soberly dressed for the occasion, Europeans and Indians, men and women, stayed as long as the examinations lasted, and even beyond, for results were declared and prizes awarded the same day. Not merely the successful candidates but their teachers also were rewarded, in cash and kind. *O temopra, O mores!* Today, as the Committee says, our examinations are either a nightmare or a mechanical formality.



While, in these days of austerity, it would be too much to expect feasts and festoons when our boys and girls go out to face what is an ordeal for them, a great deal can be done, and should be done, to lessen the fears that seize the average student at the time of the examination.

The main reason for this unholy fear is that under the present system, the fate of a candidate depends upon one single examination held at the end of one or two years. Obviously, since education is a continuous process, the testing of a student should also be a part of that process. In other words, the student should also be kept *qui vive* through the device of periodical tests, tutorial exercises, seminar discussions, dissertations, and the end-of-the-course examination. The tests other than the-end-of-the-course examination may cover a class period, say 45 minutes or one hour. These tests should preferably be of the objective type. Reading habits should be actively encouraged and I would not even mind introducing the open-book system of examinations to test how far a student has been able to make use of reference books and other reading assignments. For this purpose, of course, library service in most colleges needs to be improved and extended.

The end-of-the-course examination should, as already suggested by the Radhakrishnan Commission, preferably combine the essay type and the objective type tests. If necessary, the written tests may, where conditions permit, be supplemented by oral tests. I would recommend such oral tests for the Honours and Post-graduate students. In no case, however, should the fate of the student be made to depend on his performance at a single examination. His records, on which the final decision should legitimately depend, should comprise internal assessment as well as the external (University) examination. For this purpose every student should have a *dossier* to himself in the college office. This *dossier* should record, among other things, his performance at the college sessional tests as well as in tutorial and seminar work. A certain percentage of the total marks in a subject, say 20%, may be ear-marked for internal assessment. One of the main recommendations of the Review Committees appointed by the U.G.C. was that "Recognition should be given to sessional tests in assessing the abilities of students, and dependence on one comprehensive examination at the end of the

course should be reduced." The Committees were prepared to allot 40% of the total marks to such sessional tests. If the system succeeds in ensuring regular study habits, much of the present fears of the examinees would, I am sure, disappear.

In this connexion, I cannot help referring to Dr. Bloom's experiences with our students. During his visit to India some years ago, Bloom was asked to organize a number of "regional workshops" or seminars on examinations in which University teachers from the Osmania, Poona, Patna and Aligarh Universities were invited to participate. He also took the opportunity to invite student-groups from six different universities to give him their own impressions of the examination system and the effect that it had on them. There were about 200 such student invitees, one-third of whom were women. The majority of these students were in the final year of the Degree-course and so could be regarded as responsible representatives of the student community. But what do we find? After his talks with these students, Bloom got the impression that the typical student spends *less than an hour a day* in study outside of class attendance. Well, that is our own impression too, with this qualification, noted also by Bloom, that girls spend more time in study than boys, and that science and technical students spend more time than arts students. The students themselves lent justification to this impression. They did not see much need for additional study time during the regular year, since the major emphasis was on getting good notes from the teachers and checking them with reference to standard text-books. I do not think there is any harm in that; in fact, it is a necessary safeguard against incorrect noting. But then the students say, as they did, that these notes would be held for "a memorized version" of the subject and that any attempt to learn this material too early would be simply wasted since it couldn't be retained (in memory) until examination time! This means that a student in India spends on study about one-third to one-fifth of the time spent by an average American or British student. Bloom points out that University learning is a full-time job, and like all full-time jobs it should occupy at least 40 to 50 hours a week. Less time than that would be insufficient to maintain a student's work at University standards. The Indian student normally plans to devote major time to study only for three or four months prior to



an examination. As the course content cannot be covered within this limited period, students are obliged to take a short-cut. Dr. Bloom states : students typically claimed that they carefully studied one-half to three-fourths of the subject (in the author's opinion, one-quarter to one-half would be a more correct estimate) and gave "most careful attention" to those topics emphasised by lecturers or those questions which occurred with a certain frequency in the examination papers over a 5 to 10 year period. They paid no attention to those topics and questions which figured in the previous year's question papers. What is most interesting, however, is their relative disdain of those students who would work regularly throughout the year. Students who appeared before Bloom were eager to cite examples of a large number of such regular students who did poorly in examinations ! Was the reverse, I wonder, equally true ? It is not that the students were unaware of the fact that regular study procedures would be useful for understanding a subject. But they thought that such procedures were not appropriate to examination passing. In other words, the students made a distinction between "mastery of a subject" and "mastery of examinations." They concentrated on examinations because the rewards of Universities and ultimately the approbation of society depend on the results of an examination !

These interviews, I should say, were not only entertaining but also illuminating. They illuminate the whole field of examinations and, in their own way, they provide the justification for more recurrent testing than what is being done now. No wonder also that students should view examinations, as Bloom puts it, "as a dreaded experience !" This feeling arises from their view that "luck" and "chance" are powerful factors in the questions asked and the marks awarded. Taylor has added his weighty authority to this finding. His recommendations are, indeed, intended to eliminate the role of luck and chance, even from the essay type of examinations. So far as the objective type of examinations is concerned, if properly conducted, they would leave very little to chance. That is why I support the recommendation of the Radhakrishnan Commission that we should combine the two types of tests. The Commission thinks that in the present set up of India, the essay type of examinations to which we have grown accustomed cannot be abolished overnight. Hence he argues for a sort of co-existence of these two types. I also support

his view but I do think that the essay type of examination by itself does have some good points, as indicated above which we cannot afford to ignore. These points have academic validity but they cannot pull their full weight because of the manner in which our examinations are conducted and because we do not bother to think of properly relating the examinations to the course objectives and determining, accordingly, the type of questions to be set. The present examinations merely succeed in favouring those students who have a high level of memory-aptitude.

All this has to be changed. This is a Herculean task, not the least because it has to deal with a system that has taken root in the course of the last 100 years ; it has to remove the inertia of an age. What is wanted, if reform is to be made possible, is a new awareness of the real purpose of the educational system, a clear conception of course objectives and a determination to translate these ideas and purposes into concrete and academically feasible terms while testing our students for the same.



CHAPTER XXII

THE LANGUAGE QUESTION

I

The Question

When the British left India, they left many things behind that created problems for us, some of them very knotty ones indeed. The knottiest of them were, Pakistan, the Princes and—the English language. Though the political fight with the British has ended, our sharp differences with Pakistan persist—over Kashmir, for instance ; the anachronism of the Princes also continues, with their privy purses and privileges ; while the fight over the English language is now raging over the question of its use as the medium of instruction in Indian colleges and universities. Of these controversies, two are settled, or nearly settled : that over Kashmir, at least so far as India is concerned ; that over privy purses which, though a legal battle over the question seems imminent, is at any rate an unequal fight in the sense that the will of the people will certainly prevail over the vested interests of a handful of our countrymen, as the Princes are, still thriving on special privileges and protection ; it is the third one—the future role of the English language—which has now become a first class political issue and which threatens to break up the nation itself. It *must* be solved. The recently announced National Educational Policy is a brave attempt in that direction. I am not sure if it is going to be a final and stable solution, or merely a temporary expedient. The difficulty is that any solution proposed is certain to leave large groups of Indians in a rebellious mood. On both sides of the fence stand an array of sharply divided distinguished Indian leaders with established records of national and patriotic service. It is apprehended that in this fight education is going to be the real casualty, with the spirit of Macaulay brooding over the scene.

If a national perspective was at any time or on any occasion considered to be essential in placing an issue in the right context, it is the issue of English being retained (or not) as a medium of education.

It is good that except for occasional local manifestations of linguistic chauvinism our leaders are by and large defending their standpoints from national rather than parochial points of view. For the issue has now boiled down to—English or Hindi ?—and what shall be the role of the regional languages other than Hindi ?

So far as the field of education is concerned, the question of English or Hindi means, first, whether any of these two languages, or both, should be studied in schools and colleges as compulsory languages and secondly, whether English or the regional language should be the medium of instruction in higher education including higher technical and professional education. It is assumed that there is unanimous support for the view that the regional language should be the medium of instruction throughout the school stage ; as also a near-unanimity on the demand that all subjects in the pass course for the first Degree should be taught in the regional language (with some reservations in regard to science teaching) except that there is some difficulty in this regard in certain States with a considerable tribal population, conscious of their own distinctive character and yet possessing no language capable of being used as a medium of education since there is no literature to support the language and in many cases no script in which it can be expressed. Thirdly, the question is also being discussed in the wider perspective of English or Hindi being used as a "link language" with or without the other being used as an "associate language". At which stage, then, should the study of these languages begin ?

Finally, over-shadowing the entire field of controversy is the question of an official-cum-national language for all India. It is on record that the Indian Constituent Assembly, by the narrowest of majority, adopted the Article making Hindi the official language of India. The current controversy reveals, again and again, the strength of the Opposition. With the constitutional hurdle in its way, the Opposition is now resisting all attempts to implement this Article until there is a general consensus *among all the States* in favour of the acceptance of Hindi as the national language of India.

Thus the language question has become a formidable problem which is taxing the best brains of our country so that there may be a fair deal for all in reaching an acceptable solution. It is to be noted that the problem actually consists of a number of distinct issues



which have become interlinked creating a lot of confusion which is delaying an acceptable solution. Though our primary field for attention is education, it will be useful and necessary to disentangle the issues before we can proceed to define their impact on education.

II

A "Link" Language?

First, there is the matter of definition. The phrases which are being indiscriminately used in current debates in India are *official language*, *national language* and *link language*. Then there is the question of a language being selected as the *medium of education*. Before we do anything else we must know what the controversy is about.

The misunderstanding arises from the fact that the same language can be a *national*, *official* as well as *link language*, as English is in England, French in France or German in Germany. But they may also conceivably be different as in a polyglot country, in India for instance. For a long time in India, the Persian language was used as the official or court language ; it was succeeded by English under British Rule. There has hardly been a *national*, in the sense of common, language in India throughout her chequered history. This may have been due to the multi-linguistic character of her population who had had little opportunities of mutual contacts due to the vastness of the country and lack of communication. The same causes presumably operated in the way of the development of a *link language*. Perhaps Sanskrit, or a popularised version of it, Prakrit, served as a link language in Āryāvarta. Today a sort of composite, or pidgin, Hindi serves the same purpose. The question of a *national language* could not be an issue during the centuries of India's subjection to foreign rule. Our rulers were not interested in such an issue. Today, in free India, we are in search for a national language. The constitution has given us an *official language* ; and scheduled 14 other languages which are considered to be the national languages (in the plural) of the country. Hindi, in its several varieties, Urdu-ised, or Pidgin, each again with local variants, is understood and spoken throughout northern India and, as such, constitute the single largest linguistic group. The attempt



to canvass its case for recognition as *the* official language as well as *the* national language of India is understandable ; not so understandable is the attempt to impose it on people who are unwilling to accept it because, among other reasons, their own languages are considered to be superior to Hindi in literary merit and flexibility. Behind all this lies the initial confusion as to whether the protagonists of Hindi are really in search for a *national* language or a *link* language. Secondly, in the heat of the controversy, the significance of the fact that non-Hindi-speaking groups in India have an over-all majority over the Hindi-speaking groups is too often ignored ; on the other hand, the former appear to discount the necessity of a single national language for all India as an instrument of India's national integration. The problem is to find a solution acceptable to both the groups. It is hardly feasible to impose a language on an unwilling people.

The ideal solution is to have a single language that will function as an official, national and link language at the same time. It follows that in that case it will be possible to use that language as the medium of education. It was thus that the United States of America, originally a polyglot country, adopted English as the language for all purposes. No doubt she has developed an American variety of the English language but the point is that it is the one language that passes current throughout the entire country. On the other hand, countries like Switzerland and Canada have elected to remain bilingual or multilingual. In the European continent where people have a high degree of mobility, they are, by and large, tri-lingual, at any rate, bilingual.

In India, historical circumstances have complicated the issue. For a long time, English as the language of the ruling class functioned as the official as well as a link language. It was the official language for the whole of British India and the link language for the educated classes. There was no question of a national language, first, because India was not yet free ; secondly, because no language had yet developed into a universally spoken, or spoken and written, or common, language ; thirdly, because there was a sharp linguistic cleavage between Āryāvarta and the Deccan ; fourthly, even Hindi (as "she is spoke") which was the language that passed current over a large mass of land in northern and central India, was not really a single homogeneous language but was composed of many



variants each claiming the allegiance of hundreds of thousands of followers, so much so that even in a single State of the Indian Union, the Uttar Pradesh (formerly the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh), the Hindi of the northern parts of the State (which has had a generous helping of Urdu and Persian words) would not be easily followed by the people of the eastern parts of the State whose Hindi has a Sanskritic or Prakrit base. Finally, some of the regional languages of India, for example, Bengali or Tamil, are vibrant, vigorous languages with a rich literature far more developed than that of Hindi. The British administrators, for understandable reasons, had no desire to recognise any of the Indian languages as a "national" language. Their concern was with the English language which was to be made the medium for spreading Western culture and enlightenment in India and, as a matter of administrative necessity, for ensuring a steady supply of young men educated in English for recruitment to Government jobs and to act as a sort of interpreters between the authorities and the people. They believed in "catching 'em young" and, to that end, English was made the medium of instruction from the secondary school stage upwards.

Needless to say the British rulers got more than they had bargained for. In fact, they would have done less than justice to their own language if they had thought that its study by Indian intellectuals, with a long tradition of high cultural achievement and assimilative powers, could be tied down to its job value. In fact, it was not many years after Wood's Despatch of 1854, that rumblings began to be heard from among Imperial dovecots about the suspected disloyalty (to the British Power) of English educated Indians. We need not pursue the point except to remind that English has served the Indian people very well and it is the language with which India fought the British. Her Constitution would have been something very different if our windows opening towards the West had remained bolted and barred for the lack of a link language with the rest of the world. Would it be wrong to say that the national struggle itself was a struggle, not for national indigenous values, but for values that originated in Western soil and with which our English education had familiarised us? There is one point to be emphasised in this connection. Whatever may be the nation's final decision about the national language, the role of English



as a factor that has significantly influenced, and continue to influence, the Indian way of life cannot, and need not, be minimised. The English language is not our badge of slavery. It is our proud possession, and we must treat it as such.

There is another misconception that affects our understanding of the problem. It is argued that only a very small minority of the millions that inhabit India are proficient in English and that they function as a privileged class. It cannot, therefore, be the language of the common Indian people—those, for instance, that till the lands or work in a factory. English cannot be their link language, the critics say. Some other language must be found which is native to the soil, which has, that is, roots in Indian cultural traditions.¹ More importantly, a national perspective cannot be built up with the help of a foreign language. Some of these are, no doubt, very weighty considerations against the continued use of English as a link language and in favour of a more acceptable link language for the common people of India. Ultimately, it boils down to plea for making Hindi the link language for all India.

As the question has relevance to the consideration of the role of English (as of other languages) in the Indian educational system, the point of view set out above needs a careful examination and the removal of some fundamental misconceptions inherent in it before we can arrive at a correct assessment. The misconception is chiefly implicit in the argument that English, being spoken by a very small minority of the people of India, cannot be their link language. A link language is chiefly necessary for people who have to make frequent contacts with people speaking other languages. The people of India have a very low mobility. Very few of them move out of their districts of birth. There is, of course, some intermingling of common people, during fairs and festivals and there is likely to be some difficulty for people who may be visiting such fairs, attending the festivals or otherwise making contacts outside of their own regions. A link

¹ Thus, addressing the Conference of Vice-Chancellors called at New Delhi in September, 1967, to consider the question of the use of regional languages as the media of education, Dr. D. S. Kothari, Chairman of the U.G.C., said that "the roots of higher education should be in the soil". If it meant that the language to be used as the medium should have roots in Indian soil, then that language indisputably should be Sanskrit.

language would certainly be useful on such occasions. But then most of our common, ordinary people speak dialects, not languages. These dialects, even when belonging to the same language, show extreme variations. A Bengalee in Calcutta might find difficulty in following the dialect of a Bengalee from Chittagong. Then there are so many tribal mother-tongues not linked to any language. And, speaking of languages, Grierson, the famous linguist, found that there were as many as 225 distinct Indian languages. According to official figures (1961), the total number of languages in India (including 103 non-Indian languages) was 826 and the number of "mother tongues" 1,549. Of these as many as 24 languages claimed more than one million speakers each. The Constitution of India itself had originally scheduled as many as 14 major Indian languages. Even Hindi-speaking peoples, taking all the variants of Hindi together (133 million) do not command a majority over the non-Hindi speaking people, though there is no doubt that Hindi is by far the largest single linguistic complex in India.² A point in its favour is that many people whose mother tongue is not Hindi have already accepted it as a necessity of daily intercourse, as an *unofficial* link language. This is the language of the market-place, of the bazar, a sort of colloquial pidgin Hindi which would naturally continue to spread as the mobility of the common people of India is accelerated. For the time being, there is *no* common language for all India and any arbitrary decision will be resented by millions of people. In fact, we have to live with the thesis that for many years to come there *can be no* common language—the language that will be understood by the masses—and acceptable to all India. It is to be pondered if, in these circumstances, it is necessary to include Hindi as a school subject here and now and thereby add to the curricular burden of an average non-Hindi-speaking Indian student. Given the time, Hindi may be even more widely accepted as an unofficial link language throughout northern India, if not the whole of the country.

² The detailed break-up of the 14 scheduled languages, is as follows : Hindi, 13,34,35,360 ; Telugu, 3,76,68,132 ; Bengali, 3,38,88,939 ; Marathi, 3,32,86,771 ; Tamil, 3,05,62,706 ; Urdu, 2 ,33,23,518 ; Gujarati, 2,03,04,464 ; Kannada, 1,74,15,827 ; Malayalam, 1,70,15,782 ; Oriya, 1,57,19,398 ; Punjabi, 1,09,50,826 ; Assamese, 68,03,465 ; Kashmiri, 19,56,115 and Sanskrit, 2,544.

The case of English is different. That it is as yet spoken by a very small minority of the Indian people is easily admitted. In fact, its limited appeal is the weakest link in its armoury. It is also difficult to learn. But, then, there are two very strong arguments in its favour. One is that it is India's link language with the world, and, in this, it enjoys an unrivalled position. Secondly, the small minority of Indians who know this language are a very effective minority and it would be entirely misleading to play down their role. It is they who forged the golden link of Indian unity. It is they who not long ago guided the historic struggle for Indian independence. It is they who still interpret India to the world. It is they who build and maintain the life-lines of knowledge, culture and enlightenment between India and the world. If the aim of Indian education in its higher ranges is to make every Indian a coparcener in the world's heritage of knowledge and culture, in the conquests of science and technology, in the fruits of international research English *must* be studied, not so much as the language of the market place as a serious academic discipline. As such it must figure in school and college curriculum as an obligatory subject. Naturally, it cannot have any pretensions to displace Hindi as a link of some sort between common people, as a language of the market place. But it would be a link between one educated man and another, and when the goal of universal education is achieved—not merely universal literacy—it will then be possible for English to take its place as the link language between all classes of Indians along with Hindi, which, by that time, is expected to have improved its academic and literary status with adequate State assistance and popular support. In other words, both English and Hindi will then be associated as equal partners in the complex task of the improvement of our educational standards. In fact, the ultimate picture would be that of a Commonwealth of Indian languages, instead of an Empire dominated by either English or Hindi.

Lest one should think that any support given to English meant playing down the role of Hindi as the only possible medium of mass communication throughout this vast sub-continent of ours, it must be admitted that the need for such a medium of mass communication has assumed an urgency in the modern democratic set-up of our country that it can no longer be shelved. But the question should



be considered from two aspects : that is, from the point of view of a communication medium among the common people, as a means of understanding what the other man is talking about ; and secondly, from the point of view of a compulsory school subject. We reserve the second aspect of the question for fuller treatment in a subsequent section of this chapter.³ So far as the first is concerned, it is universally accepted that the language to be used as a medium of mass communication among ordinary people, very few of whom would, bother to move out of their own respective regions, must have its roots in the soil : it must be one of the major languages of India and, since Hindi in its several varieties is already spoken and/or understood by the largest group of the Indian people, its claim to be recognised as a sort of Indian *lingua franca* deserves the utmost consideration. But as it has raised the dust of controversy and has not yet reached the stage of general acceptability, it is desirable to bring under review the grounds on which the opposition to Hindi is based. But before we pass on to consider the arguments, it is better that a preliminary reference be made the basic issue involved, namely, the need for a *lingua franca*.

Is it necessary, we may ask, to have one, and only one, of the several major languages of India as *lingua franca* ? There are countries which have more than one recognised language for official use.

We have, in fact, the need for four distinct types of inter-communication : (a) intercommunication among common people ; (b) intercommunication for the intelligentsia, for educated people ; (c) intercommunication at official level ; and (d) intercommunication with the outside world.

Let us first take the most non-controversial type, i.e., type (d). This, for Indians, must obviously be English.

Then, type take (c). Part XVII of the Constitution of India lays down a certain policy with regard to the "Official Language of the Union". *It shall be Hindi in Devanagri script.* This is provided by Article 343(1) of the Constitution. This provision, however, was adopted by the Constituent Assembly of India by the majority of one vote only and that was the casting vote of its President himself who was

³ See Section VI.



a distinguished advocate of Hindi. However, a majority even of one vote is a majority. What is more relevant to notice is that on the basis of the vote in the Constituent Assembly which, in spite of the fact that it was heavily weighted in favour of the Congress Party, the members were equally divided between the 'aye's and the 'no's. This shows the strength of the initial opposition to the claim of Hindi to be unequivocally recognized as the sole official language of the Union. At the same time, the framers of the Constitution appear to have mollified the opposition by providing, under Article 343(2) that for a period of 15 years from the commencement of the Constitution, the English language *shall* continue to be used for all the official purposes of the Union with a proviso that the President *may*, during the said period, *by order* authorise the use of the Hindi language for any of the official purposes of the Union. A further concession to the opposition was provided under Article 343(3) which lays down : "Notwithstanding anything in this article, President may *by law* provide for the use, after the said period of fifteen years, of (a) the English or (b) the Devanagri form of numerals (in the place of the international form of Indian numerals). It is further provided under Article 344(1) that after the expiration of five years from the commencement of the Constitution and thereafter at the expiration of ten years from such commencement, the President by order shall constitute a Commission which, under subsection (2) of the same Article, is required to make recommendations to the President "for the progressive use of the Hindi language for the official purposes of the Union" as well as the language to be used (under Article 348) in the Supreme Court and the High Courts. This Commission is further authorised to make recommendations on any matter referred to the Commission by the President as regards the official language of the Union and "the language for communication between the Union and a State or between one State and another State". It is particularly laid under the obligation of paying "due regard" to the industrial, cultural and scientific advancement of India and "the just claims and the interests of persons belonging to the non-Hindi speaking areas in regard to the public services". While the English language, and ultimately Hindi, is designed (by the Constitution) to be the official language of the Union, so far as the regional languages were concerned, Article 345 provides that a State legislature



" may by law adopt any one or more of the languages in use in the State or Hindi as the language or the languages to be used for all or any of the official purposes of the State ", pending which the English language " shall continue to be used for those official purposes within the States for which it was being used immediately before the commencement of the Constitution". So far as communication between the Union and the States is concerned, Article 346 provides that until it is agreed between these States (in which case, that language becomes the official language of communication), the language for the time being authorised for use in the Union for official purposes shall be the channel of official communication between such States or the States and the Union.

All these provisions of the Indian Constitution go to show that while the Centre stands committed to adopt Hindi as the " official language " of the Union and to help other States doing the same, there is no rigidity about the time-limit for the realisation of this objective, that is, the States may take their own time to decide upon the use of Hindi even for their official purposes. To make the safeguard doubly effective and in response to public agitation (in which the South played a decisive part) and at Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's instance, an assurance to the effect that Hindi shall not be imposed on any State, unless wanted by it, and that English shall continue to be an "associate" language during the interval is to be incorporated in the Official Languages Act has already been accepted by Parliament. This implies the acceptance of the principle of *two link languages* in the sphere of official communications. The fact that almost all of the States in India had, until the 1967 elections, Congress Governments made the acceptance of the transitional arrangements which permitted the use of the English language for official purposes (along with Hindi) for an indefinite period easier. Now, with non-Congress Governments on the saddle in various States, the future becomes, perhaps, a little more uncertain, though so far as the Hindi-speaking States are concerned, a change of government does not appear to have affected their language policy. But many more than before have become articulate in their opposition to the official stand. To them, English must remain the means of inter-communication for official purposes between the Union and the States.

This type of inter-communication and that among the intelligentsia—type (b) as above—will be further examined in the following section. So far as inter-communication among the common people is concerned, the case for a single *lingua franca* is the strongest. A common man who has possibly received education up to the elementary stage cannot be expected to have the competence to speak and write in more than one language. Today about 300 millions of people are illiterate and it will take the best part of two decades, if not more, to make them “educated” even up to the upper primary standard. A saving grace of the situation is that most of these people have a low degree of mobility. As already suggested, through progressive contact with Hindi-speaking people, they can, and do, pick up a sufficient vocabulary of Hindi words and phrases of common use, a sort of bazar Hindi, and make it the *lingua franca* of the common man. It would be a good idea if every elementary school, and in particular, every adult education centre, makes arrangements for teaching simple colloquial Hindi on a voluntary basis. The best period for learning this kind of Hindi possibly covers the age-group 11-14, i.e., from classes VI-VIII. Even in the primary classes, the child could be introduced to conversational Hindi by direct methods of teaching, by showing Hindi short films, by reciting from Tulsidas's *Rāmcharitmānasa* or telling stories and so on, of course, on a voluntary basis. Compulsion would immediately involve us into the contradictions of a three-language formula. In this matter, we should rather follow the prudence of our Constitution-makers than try to insist on the “pound of flesh” here and now. Even if the law allows it, the court of public opinion may not award it.

Reference may be made in this connection to the developments that have taken place in regard to India's language policy so far as official thinking on the subject is concerned. The constitutional provision that Hindi shall be the official language of the Union on the expiry of 15 years from the date of commencement of the Constitution could not be implemented as the country was not prepared for it and so advantage was taken of sub-section 3 of Article 343 to provide by law for the continued use of English for official purposes as well as the business in Parliament. A law—The Official Language Act—was passed by Parliament in May, 1963, for this

purpose. During the discussions on the Bill in Parliament, certain assurances were given by Prime Minister Nehru in the course of a statement made before the Lok Sabha on the 24th April, 1963, which were subsequently re-confirmed by a statement made by his successor, Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Sastri in a broadcast from the All-India Radio on the 11th February, 1965. It was made clear during these assurances that no date would be fixed in advance for making Hindi the sole official language of India, that is, there would be no time-limit for replacing English by Hindi as the official and link language. Prime Minister Sastri affirmed the full freedom of every constituent State of India to continue to use the regional language, or English as long as it liked, to carry on its own business in the language of its choice and that no change would be made in the existing practice of the State Governments to communicate with the Union Government in English, without the consent of such States. It was also affirmed that English should continue to be used in all transactions at the Union level and that if any State communicated with another State in the regional language it was to be accompanied by an authorised English translation of the communication.

Needless to add, these assurances were given to allay the misgivings of the non-Hindi-speaking States who were led to apprehend that Hindi was going to be imposed on them against their will. It was now made clear that those States were free to retain English as long as they wanted to. There were, however, repeated demands that these assurances should be given legislative shape. Demand was even made from certain quarters that these assurances should be incorporated in the Constitution. Accordingly a Bill amending the Official Language Act of 1963 was introduced in the Lok Sabha on the 27th November, 1967, and passed by that House on the 16th December. In a nutshell, this amending Act confirmed the status of English as an "associate" language (along with Hindi) after the expiry of the 15 years stipulated in the Constitution and protected the right of a non-Hindi-speaking State to continue to use English, if it so preferred, in its official business. It was, of course, provided that if a Hindi-speaking State communicated with a non-Hindi-speaking State in Hindi, such communication should be accompanied by an authorised English translation. In fact, the Act went further and laid down that even in inter-Ministry communications within



the Government of India or any undertakings or offices under its control, there should be English or Hindi translations respectively of all correspondence or communication in Hindi or English, that is, until such time as the staff had not acquired sufficient proficiency in Hindi.

Associated with these steps was the Government's thinking on what has now come to be regarded as the "three-language formula". The legislation referred to above was an attempt to make the gradual acceptance of Hindi as the official language of India easier at the top. Steps were necessary also to ensure that the path may be made equally easy for the acceptance of Hindi by the general masses as the *national* language of India. That it was going to be an equally time-consuming process was also never in doubt. The process must naturally start at the school stage just as the British rulers did in their own days with regard to English, with this vital difference, of course, that Hindi is an Indian language and not a foreign tongue. Another vital difference is that Hindi is proposed to be introduced as a *language* to be learnt and *not* as the medium of instruction, for it has been clearly laid down as a fundamental part of the new educational policy that the mother tongue or the regional language shall be the medium of instruction in the schools and colleges and even, as an ultimate objective, at the University level. Incidentally this has raised a fresh controversy as to the desirability of displacing English as the medium of education in the higher stages of learning, including law, medicine and the engineering sciences and technology. The present idea is embodied in the "three-language formula". Its object is to impart a knowledge of Hindi on a compulsive basis at the school stage (along with English and the regional language) so that, in the fulness of time, all Indians, irrespective of regional considerations, will have learnt sufficient Hindi to be able not only to read and write it but carry on intelligent conversation in it with another with a different mother tongue. This may take 10, 15 or 20 years; but the objective will be there in full view: to bring the search for a national language to a successful close.

The perspective is, no doubt, fixed. But the imponderability of human nature has to be taken into account and that is why the language question bids fair to remain a question far into the foreseeable future. We shall examine the how and why of it in some



detail in the succeeding sections. Here it is permissible to add that the Resolution accepted in December, 1967, in support of the Official Language (Amendment) Act has exposed a fresh weakness—and a very important one at that—in the Government stand. It is the recommendation that the Union Public Service Commission should hold its examinations for recruitment to the All-India and higher Central Services through the medium of all the 15 languages listed in the Eighth Schedule to the Indian Constitution ! The U.P.S.C. has since accepted the recommendation. This is a further evidence of the state of confusion to which a so-called national language policy, conceived in haste and in impatience, and suffering from the risks of a premature delivery, is about to reduce the whole country.

III

A National Language : Hindi ?

We first turn our attention to the question of a national language for India. This, as has been mentioned, should be distinguished from (a) the official language and (b) the link language. Before the issue of language had reached its present controversial dimensions, there used to be occasional references to the need for a "common language" for all India. The phrase *common* language has now reached the status of a *national* language in current discussions. It is in fact, a post-Independence concept. But the arguments that used to be advanced for and against the idea of a common language are also, *mutatis mutandis*, applicable to that of a national language: with this difference that the idea has now acquired a prestige value in that India has now become a nation. "Ek Bhasha" is sought to be added to the slogan of "Ek Bidhan, Ek Nishan, Ek Pradhan (One Constitution, One Flag, One Head of the State : *plus*—now—One Language). The question is, should Hindi be this one (common) language for all India and acquire the prestige of the national language of the country ? —and more fundamentally, is it as essential to have a single language for the entire country as it is to have a single Constitution, a single Flag and a single President ?

It is to be noticed that the Indian Constitution has provided for an *official* language for the Union of India and not for

a *national* language. Even in respect of the official language, the substantive article is not an unqualified one in so far as—apart from its formal recognition—its implementation is made to depend on certain contingencies. Naturally, there are additional reasons why a common language cannot be created by executive fiat or by a legislative imperative, with the help of a simple party majority. A common language must satisfy its first essential condition, namely, that it must be *common* to the country ; not that it must be the language of all the peoples of India, but at least it should be the language of a substantially large majority of the people in order to ensure what should be its second criterion, namely, *general acceptability*. Thirdly, if a language is to attain the status and prestige of a National Language, it must have an innate strength as well as powerful literary traditions behind it.

Does Hindi satisfy these conditions ?

With great regret—and the regret, I daresay, is shared even by non-Hindi-speaking people because every nation would like to have a single national language of its own, if possible—it must be said that Hindi does not satisfy any of the conditions specified above, except that it is spoken by the largest single group of people in India. There is controversy even in regard to the actual numerical strength of the Hindi-speaking people and its percentage in relation to the total population of India. According to the supporters of Hindi, the percentage is as high as 42. Even according to this estimate, 58 per cent of the total population of India do not speak Hindi. To this latter group, Hindi is a foreign tongue, perhaps a little less than English.

Let us have a closer look at the facts and the figures that are involved in either supporting or contesting the claim.

(a) *Numerical Strength* : Hindi, it has been repeatedly pointed out, is not a single homogeneous language. It consists of many variants such as Punjabi, Rajasthani, Urdu, Western and Eastern Hindi, Maithili, etc. There are considerable linguistic differences among them. At the time of the introduction of the new Constitution of India, Hindi claimed 108 million followers. By 1961, it had risen to 133.4 million. The 14 languages originally listed in Schedule VIII included as many as 380 "mother tongues." Of these, Western Hindi, with 71 million votaries, was composed of what may be described as High Hindi, Urdu and Hindusthani. As



Hindi travels down from West to East, from the Punjab to Bihar, the language is diluted almost beyond recognition. Indeed, according to the evidence given before the Parliamentary Committee on the Official Language Commission appointed in June, 1955, the people of the western part of Uttar Pradesh did not understand the Hindi of the eastern part of the same State. It is not necessary to follow Mr. Frank Anthony, Member of Parliament, who, writing in the *Statesman* on August 25, 1967, stated that "not even one per cent of the Hindi-speaking people understand what now passes for the new Hindi, with its frenetic attempts to enlarge its vocabulary by all kinds of artificial monstrosities and resurrections from a dustbin of dead words"—after all, a language has to grow, and under the compulsion of circumstances, as in India, to grow fast ; but the fact remains that Hindi is very definitely the language of a minority to which large masses of the Indian people are even now undoubtedly strangers. Incidentally, the following extract from a press report of the proceedings of the National Integration Conference held in October, 1961, would prove interesting :

What type of Hindi should be developed ? This question was posed to-day before the National Integration Conference.

While the Conference itself did not take a formal decision, the consensus of opinion was that Hindi should be simple which everybody could understand and not a kind of Hindi that only the elect could follow.

Prime Minister Nehru said that as it had been evolved in recent years, this Hindi was very difficult to understand. He instanced the 'very odd experience' he had in Moscow during his recent visit there. A Russian lady, he said, had learnt Hindi very carefully in college and university there. "When I spoke in Moscow, which I did often, she did not understand my Hindi. She had learnt it quite well. But she completely felt at sea when I spoke."

The Hindi Poet, Mr. R. D. Dinkar, said that the official word—"coiners" of Hindi were playing havoc with Hindi. Shri Nehru said : "You better whisper that to your neighbour."

The obvious reference was to the Information and Broadcasting Minister, Dr. B. V. Keskar, who sat next to Mr. Dinkar. Dr. Keskar who was taken back said : "I am, Sir, in complete agreement."⁴

Naturally, a common language, particularly, if it is to claim the status of a "national language," should stand on its own rights and

⁴ Report in the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, October 3, 1961.

not be made up as a synthetic language in order to pass muster as the language of the majority.

(b) *General Acceptability* : Even assuming that Hindi is spoken by the largest single group of Indians running into 108 million, its acceptability would depend upon its historical traditions as well as its geographical distribution over the Indian sub-continent. Frank Anthony has referred to the view of Suniti Kumar Chatterjee, who is now one of our National Professors and whose acquaintance with the Indian language system is unrivalled, to the effect that "Khari-Boli" Hindi (which is really the language which claims the distinction of being India's national language) had no existence prior to 1850. As against this, the Bengali language has had a continuous growth since the ninth century, Marathi goes back to the 13th century while Tamil, hallowed with age, possesses a literature which vies with that in Sanskrit.³ As regards geographical distribution, here also facts must be faced. Even if Punjab is included as a Hindi-speaking region, its eastward spread stops well outside of the borders of West Bengal and it has no foothold in South India. No doubt even then, it is a colossal area by itself ; but it is also a compact area and amounts to a region, just as Bengal or Tamilnad is a region, only a somewhat bigger region, but not a region bigger than the area of the rest of India, and is, in any case, "tucked away in one part," the Deccan being more or less excluded.

(c) *Status and Prestige* : If it is agreed that the national language must possess a certain literary status in its own right and not merely deriving from the mechanics of mere numbers, Hindi would make a rather tame show. Its critics point out that Hindi has no corpus of books or knowledge in Hindi to make it an adequate index of intellectual advancement to justify an all-India national ranking. Without subscribing to such extreme views, it would probably be generally agreed that Hindi has no literature comparable to that of, say, Bengali or Tamil, not to speak of English or any other modern European language. It would be over-optimistic on anybody's part to expect that it

³ *Vide Report of the University Education Commission (1948).*



would be possible to persuade any of the areas in India with rich literary traditions to accept, in its own unfettered judgment, a relatively backward language, in preference to its own, even with the stamp of "national" imprinted on it. One is not even sure that even Hindi-speaking students in Colleges and Universities, given a choice between English and Hindi, as a teaching or examination medium, would opt for Hindi. In non-Hindi areas, next to the regional language, English is preferred to Hindi as the second language.* There are cases on record in support of these observations. It is also stated that in addition to the lack of a literary background Hindi has had no political or administrative tradition because there has never been a Hindi State in history. A look at the Indian Cabinet that took over power from the British in 1947 should be enough to counter this line of criticism. After all it is the men who govern, not their language. Or else, how did Shivaji or Akbar govern, for they were illiterates in the usual sense of the term? Perhaps these may be dismissed as stray instances. But when the Radhakrishnan Commission also observed that "Hindi is the language of the minority, although a large minority" and that "it does not possess any advantages, literary or historical, over the other modern Indian languages", it became a clear warning to all concerned to pause and ponder.

IV

A National Language (continued) : English ?

The very idea of English being even thought of as India's national language would strike as preposterous to most Indians. It may be pointed out, however, that English is not one of the 14 languages

* Mr. Frank Anthony, in his letter to the *Statesman* referred to above, refers to a recent occasion in the Uttar Pradesh when an option was given to those taking the Intermediate Examination to answer their papers either in Hindi or in English. As many as 85 per cent of the candidates who had throughout been studying through the medium of Hindi opted for English. He also referred to the 1961 linguistic census which showed that while 11 million people returned English as their second language, only 9 million returned Hindi, inspite of the compulsion attached to its teaching. It is also often asked why do many of the staunch advocates of Hindi send their own children to English-medium schools?

originally listed in schedule VIII of the Indian Constitution. Incidentally, one of the other languages so listed is Sanskrit, a dead language. It may also be mentioned that English is the mother-tongue of one of India's own communities, namely, the Anglo-Indians. The latter is as much a part of the Indian nation to-day as, say, the Indian Christians or any other community native to India. It would, therefore, be not quite correct to say that English is a totally foreign language.

To what extent it is possible to consider the claim of English to be regarded as *the* national language of India would be determined on the basis of the following considerations :

(a) English is already recognised as a "link" language (*i*) between India and the world and (*ii*) among the intelligentsia in different parts of India. Though the number speaking this language is comparatively very small, it is much more effective in its power of expression, influence and prestige-value than any of the other Indian languages including Hindi. Its world status is universally acknowledged.

(b) The geographical distribution of the English-speaking people of India is not confined to any specific region or area ; they are to be found all over the country. As the only language which is not confined to any particular region or area, it would not cause any heart-burning in any part of India, or jealousy among other linguistic groups, and all communities, irrespective of their mother tongues—with the exception of the small Anglo-Indian community—will be equally placed if English is used, as it is now, as the medium of higher teaching or all-India examinations. To meet the possible objection to the difficulty of learning the language and the large percentage of failures in English, it may be necessary to streamline the teaching of English as well as to improve the syllabus so as to make the best use of the time available for teaching the subject in suitably graded levels, especially at the secondary stage.

(c) To permit the continued use of English as both the official and link language, as well as for inter-State communication, will have the following advantages : it will cause the least disturbance to the administration and save a good deal of the tax-payers' money now spent on costly linguistic experiments of doubtful utility ; it will eliminate inter-regional rivalries based on competing linguistic claims that have already caused a lot of confusion in the public mind ;



and (iii) it will check, if not put a stop to, the baneful effects of political lobbying or other kinds of group-pressure as well as the corrupting influence of money-bags on an issue of such vital importance to the nation as a whole.

(d) The continued use of English as the language of inter-communication may give a much-needed breathing time until Hindi (or any other language listed in Schedule VIII) is more fully developed and attains a sufficient stature to displace English. It is indeed necessary to allow time for a dispassionate consideration of the issues involved in choosing a single national language for the whole country. The decision either way will be of such momentous consequence to the nation that a few more years of preparatory work—and of patience—will rather help one to come to a correct judgment.

It is now necessary that we should examine the arguments on the other side—arguments against the proposal to make English the national language of India, and to find out if the objections can be reasonably met.

(a) The main argument—which to many clinches the issue and makes it unnecessary to go into other arguments at all—is that it is a preposterous idea to make English the *national* language of India. As an international language, it certainly is unrivalled in India and it should be learnt and taught well. But the plea to make it a *national* language of India bespeaks a “slave mentality” from which India had struggled so long to be free and has at last succeeded.

May be there is an answer to it but it is doubtful if it will carry general acceptance. But then the case for Hindi also has not yet been able to secure general acceptance. The answer really is that an international language like English which is taught as a compulsory subject in many foreign countries, and the world literature it has created, are not the exclusive property of any single nation nor does it indicate a political surveillance to Britain if a country freely chooses to accept this medium for the expression of its highest thoughts. To India, since she became free, English has ceased to be a badge of slavery. If India votes for it now, she votes for it as a free agent. Yesterday, English might have rankled as an imposition; to-day it becomes our proud possession.

(b) There is, then, the idea that the use of English “divides the people into two nations.” The words quoted are from no less an



authority than the Radhakrishnan Commission. The two nations consist of those who speak English and those who do not. The suggestion, alternatively, is that Hindi will re-unite them.

What English has actually done is that, in a polyglot country, it has succeeded in giving at any rate the intelligentsia a common speech. If an intelligentsia divides a people into two irreconcilable classes, English should possibly plead guilty. The fact is that there is, at all events, and in every land, a social distance between the intelligentsia and the rest of the country, irrespective of whether the former speaks English or Hindi. Merely making Hindi the common language of India will not bridge that gap, just as it will not bridge the gap between capital and labour (whether the capitalist is an American multi-millionaire or an Indian tycoon). Perhaps the critics want to say that an English-speaking Indian affects Western manners, following Western custom and subscribes to Western ideas which estrange him from his fellow Indians who do not speak this language. The charge must be admitted to some extent. There will always be a certain proportion of cultural freaks in every society, people who would scoff with an upturned nose at anything Indian and go into raptures over everything Western. They constitute the so-called Anglicised class, which really stands miles apart from the true Indian, native to the soil. If this anglicised Indian community constitutes a nation by itself, there are indeed two nations. But this is not a fact. A microscopic community within a nation can hardly be called a nation. It is not even a community but an assorted collection of individuals. Even then, not all "anglicists" are freaks. We gratefully remember that it was a group of Indians—a succession of them—highly educated in English—who produced the leadership of, and later on inspired and guided, the national struggle. They truly represented India and interpreted Indian thoughts and aspirations to the world ; they made the people conscious of themselves as a nation ; and it is they—people educated in English—who stood ready on the doorsteps of the Imperial mansion at Delhi to receive on behalf of the nation the powers of a Sovereign State and made a smooth transfer of power possible. English-speaking Indians to-day number, not a select few, but millions, though compared to the total population of India they are a small minority. They are not anglicists ; they are Indians. They may speak English, but they speak India's mind. And we must not forget that many of



them are included among the 108 million Indians who speak Hindi.

(c) Another point made in the Radhakrishnan Report is that the class of Indians educated in English suffer from what it calls "split-consciousness". In other words, education through English results in personal maladjustment. Every language is based on a certain culture-pattern. The home and the immediate social circle of the average Indian are far removed from, or may even be alien to, that culture-pattern. Therefore, the Indian educated through the medium of English has to live in two worlds somewhat like Walter Mitty. The idea presumably is that such maladjusted individuals are social misfits and that militates against national solidarity and progress.

Assuming that this picture of an Indian educated in English, with a split consciousness, is a case against English, is not the use of Hindi with its admitted deficiencies, as a compulsory medium of education as well as of common intercourse, going to be a similar, and more extensive, instrument of producing men and women with split consciousness? On the other hand, since a good knowledge of English commands a prestige value, an Indian, educated in English, may have, in addition to his native land, the rest of the world as his own, too. This will provide him with larger opportunities of a fuller and more satisfying cultural life. What is more important, he will have the power and capacity for remoulding his own society so that it can fall in line with his own estimate of the progressive societies of the world. This process will be accelerated, not retarded, by a more rapid expansion of English education for which there is now a growing, nor lessening, demand in the country.⁷

(d) It is argued that in so far as a common language is a powerful means of national integration, no pains should be spared for building up of such a language, and such a language must have its roots in the soil, in the culture of the country, in its traditions, and in its mass appeal. English obviously cannot be that language.

That a national language should have its roots in the country and have a mass appeal is a self-evident proposition. That English will not pass this test is also clear. On the other hand, Hindi, in

⁷ See Humayun Kabir : *Education in New India*, Chapter 6, pp. 116-118.

this respect, stands on a firmer ground. But for reasons already stated, there are certain difficulties in the way of accepting Hindi as a national language, either—at any rate, not now. It has not yet passed the test of general acceptability. The present stage of its development will not justify its claim to be recognised as the language of the Indian nation. But of course, it is coming up. So are the other regional languages, some of which are already highly developed in literary standards, flexibility and improvisation. Someday the choice would be easier and a consensus reached. The present slogan should better be : Wait and Watch.

V

The Case for Hindi, further considered

That there is a very strong and influential lobby for Hindi is for anyone to see. There are good reasons for its existence. Of the three Presidents of India, two came from Hindi-speaking areas. All the Prime Ministers have hailed from the Uttar Pradesh, the stronghold of the Hindi lobby. Almost all the major political parties with an all-India base support Hindi. Some would abolish English altogether. Even those who have been willing to wait a little for an acceptable and peaceful solution of the problem are now restive and would like to set a more or less rigid time-limit to complete the changeover to Hindi. As pointed out, there is authority behind their demand. In India, as many as 289 out of 504 members of Parliament (*Lok Sabha*) come from areas which are committed to Hindi.* Out of these, 139 members hail from Bihar (53) and Uttar Pradesh (86), the home of Hindi. So, if the issue were to be decided by vote and determined by the territorial loyalties of the M.P.'s, Hindi would win by a comfortable majority. That they have deferred judgment for the time being reveals their political good sense.

* Stretching from West to East—Rajasthan, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar ; Gujarat and Maharashtra ; and Madhya Pradesh. These constitute a solid land mass, stretching over 1,898,661 sq. kilometres covering a population of 254,575,045. These of course, are not all Hindi-speaking.



The question would ultimately involve the resolution of a moral issue or be decided as a matter of expediency. The moral issue is whether a national language, decided as such by vote, should be foisted on a considerable section of the population opposed to it. The question of expediency comes in when the opposition is raised to a pitch, involving the peace and tranquillity of the country. There is also the question of Centre-State relations in a federal set-up. The Union is certainly competent to enforce Hindi for all official communication issuing from its offices. The Constitution, in fact, gives it the necessary authority subject to certain contingencies. There is no mention of a "national" language as such in the Constitution. To adopt one would presumably require a national consensus. That consensus is at present lacking, probably because the assurance has been given that the issue will not be forced. After all, the country is now seized of the problem of an all-India official language and the role of English as a medium of education. These have to be decided before the further expansion of the role of Hindi can be thought of. This is a prudent decision.

In the public frenzy that has been whipped up in certain areas over the language question, one thing is frequently lost sight of and that is the categorical pronouncement of Article 343(1) of the Constitution. Opponents of Hindi seem to concentrate on Article 343(3) providing for the continued use of English even after the expiry of the time-limit prescribed under Article 343(2). There are also clear assurances given by Prime Minister Nehru in regard to making English an associate language for what is really an interim period even after Hindi is made the official language. These are obviously in the nature of rearguard action. Hindi, as our Constitution prescribes, has come to stay. It is just waiting outside the house preparing to come in. The house is at present full of clamouring tenants. It must be vacated for Hindi to come into occupation. It is asked to wait a while. Meanwhile, the house must be got ready and the occupants, to prevent any hardship, should be nicely provided after friendly discussion.

It must be appreciated that the case for Hindi stands on the basis of a very democratic claim, and on the hypothesis that India wants a national language, an official language and a link language for the common people, the claim is for all the three being one and the same.



Since every 4 out of 10 Indians speak Hindi in some form or other—and with the Government committed to the maximum efforts for its development—Hindi feels justified in its claim to be the first choice of the nation as the language of inter-communication without any rival. If the choice is re-affirmed by the people—it may ultimately require a plebiscite or a referendum at the hustings with the guarantee of a free vote for the purpose—the development of the language can proceed at double speed with the cooperation of linguists, lexicographers, philologists, scholars, teachers, scientists, economists, political leaders as well as specialists in different fields. But it must have that honour and that opportunity.

It is difficult not to sympathise with this point of view ; or ungracious to point out that in the case of a language the present compulsion is as important as the promise of the future. Children have to be educated, men and women employed, the country administered. Man's deepest emotions are roused if he is asked to compromise on his mother tongue. He is likely to be equally adamant if it hurts his sense of values. A Bengali takes pride in his language and would feel mortified to yield to Hindi. So would a Tamilian. English, on the other hand, is admitted on its own merits. It is the Indian's passport to the wider world of culture and enlightenment. It has, in fact, enriched the other languages of India. We have paid a heavy price to come into this rich legacy ; it would require very strong arguments to put it out of our linguistic calculations.

If, therefore, English is to be retained, the question of a national language will have to wait. English will naturally function as a link language. For the time being, it will continue to link the intelligentsia. But as education progresses and there is increasing and wider recognition of the value of English, it will, sooner rather than later, establish itself as the link language of a very large section of ordinary men and women ; that is, if we do not choose to put the hands of the clock back.

VI

Hindi as a School Subject

We have so far discussed the role of Hindi as a *lingua franca*, that is, as a medium of communication among common people for



whom a simple type of conversational Hindi (which in any case, is already in vogue because of large scale contacts which Hindi-speaking peoples have already established throughout India at the mass level) as well as its possible role as a link language at a higher level, or as a national language. There is yet another role which the protagonists of Hindi want this language to assume, namely, that it should be prescribed as a compulsory school subject throughout India.

In a sense, this last demand is basic to the demand to have Hindi recognised as an official as well as link language, as a means of inter-communication for all classes of Indians. As the Constitution has recognised Hindi written in the Devanagri script as the official language of the Union of India and has also provided for its use as a medium of communication between one State and another, it would be necessary to arrange for the compulsory teaching of the subject which, in order to be taught well, should begin early in the school course. At which point exactly it would start should naturally be left for educationists in each State to determine.

The position thus stated appears unassailable. In fact, many schools in different parts of India have already arranged for the compulsory teaching of the subject as part of the school course along with the regional language. With English as another language to be compulsorily taught from an early age of the school student, what is commonly called the three-language system is already in operation *de facto* in the non-Hindi areas. It is also part of the scheme that in the Hindi-speaking areas (where Hindi is the regional language), another modern Indian language should be taken up as the third language. I am not sure if the Hindi-speaking areas have done so. If not, they must presumably be proceeding on the basis of a two-language formula, Hindi and English ; and if, as Hindi chauvinism would have it, English is made an optional subject, even ousted from the curriculum, they would practically have reduced their language teaching just to one single language, Hindi. A well-organised militant and vocal socialist party has already adopted the slogan, *Angrezi Hatao* ("Push out English"). Since the Englishman has gone, his language, it is demanded, should form part of his luggage to follow him out. The one ruled and the other is the symbol of that rule, the yet continuing badge of our slavery ! So both must quit.

Now this last point, urged by the militant Socialists, is not, fortunately, shared by the other political parties to the point of making it a part of their platform. But there are certain pointers which indicate the direction of the wind. One is that while Hindi is taken in, or already recognised as, a compulsory subject in schools, English is being converted into an optional subject. It is further provided in certain States that failure in English should not entail total failure at the examination. This is already the case in Bihar so far as candidates taking the School Final and Higher Secondary examinations are concerned. The Bihar Education Minister was also reported to have requested the Vice-Chancellors of Universities in Bihar to allow those undergraduates who failed only in English to pass. Now, from the strictly academic point of view, it is debatable whether failure in one subject only—not merely English, but any subject—should vitiate the entire examination. So far as English is concerned, if it is accepted that failure in English would be condoned, it would have the same effect, particularly in the Hindi-speaking areas (as in Bihar, for example), as supporting a one-language system. This would be unmistakably unfair to the non-Hindi speaking States with their three-language—or at any rate, two-language-system. For if Hindi is made the “Rashtra Bhasha”—State language—there would be compulsion on the students in the non-Hindi areas to learn this language while there would be no corresponding urge for the Hindi-speaking States to learn compulsorily another Indian language. On the other hand, if the former also reject the claim of Hindi to be a “must” for all Indians and stick to their own regional languages only, it would only result in what may be described as complete “Babelisation” of India, a sequel to Hindi extremism.

Whether a language is to be used as a compulsory school subject depends on (a) its basic literary value, as a gateway to learning and knowledge and (b) its purely utilitarian value, that is, its communication value, as providing the learner with the ability to converse easily with fellow human beings without the help and intrusion of interpreters. A knowledge of Hindi so far as educated people are concerned, should admittedly be on a higher level than that of a bazar language. The question is whether, on this ground, it should be included as a compulsory school subject. The question



presumably concerns the non-Hindi speaking areas, and it is to be decided with reference to the number of languages a school student should or could conveniently learn. If he has to learn only one additional language (that is, in addition to the mother tongue or the regional language), then what that language should be ? If, on the other hand, he has to learn two languages other than the mother-tongue, should Hindi be one of these two ?

Let us first consider the case of English, for if English is to be retained as a compulsory subject of study, then Hindi can have no place in a two-language system in so far as the other language must inevitably be the mother-tongue or the regional language. There are certain considerations which are presented in favour of retaining English as a compulsory school subject. It will be seen that some of these considerations are of a contingent character. It is, in the long run, related to the question of the medium for higher education. There is a very strong body of opinion in favour of retaining English as the medium of instruction in the higher stages of education including professional education ; alternatively, there are insuperable difficulties in making any other language, in its present stage of development, the medium of higher education. That being so, it is essential that this language—English—should be taught well and taught on a compulsory basis, for, otherwise, due to the difficulty of learning this language, it might not be learnt at all. On the other hand, if the process of learning this language starts early, it can be split up into easy, graduated stages. Of course, when the regional languages are well developed, there would be time for considering whether English should be relegated to the position of an optional subject in the school course, and whether the regional language could be used as the medium of instruction up to the highest stages of education, post-graduate, research, technological, and professional (including law, medicine and engineering). Unfortunately, that stage would take some time to arrive, may be longer than many people believe. It will, therefore, be necessary in India's interest to retain English as a medium for all purposes of graduate study and to make the study of English compulsory at the school stage so that the switch-over to English as the medium of instruction in the higher stages may not pose any difficulty for the student. If this view is accepted, it only remains to state that the teaching of English at the school



level (as well as at the college stage) should be improved. It leads also to the conclusion that if English is retained as a compulsory language in school, the only other language in a two-language system will naturally be the mother-tongue or the regional language.

The case for English to be used as a medium of instruction (or in a somewhat different sense, medium of education, a phrase used by the Education Commission) even at the higher levels does not, it must be admitted, command universal acceptance. There is, as already pointed out, a powerful view in favour of making the regional languages the media of instruction even at the highest stages of education. There is also the fact that a large wastage of talent occurs—and this is a matter for particular concern if such wastage continues to occur at the higher stages of education—through the failure of the average candidate only because he cannot adequately express his thoughts and knowledge in a language which, to all intents and purposes, is foreign to him. Ask him to explain himself in his own mother-tongue, he will certainly do much better. Another argument in favour of making the regional language the medium of instruction in the higher stages of education in India is that when once this is done, books of the requisite standard written in the regional languages would be forthcoming. Even now, standard books in the regional languages are available in, at any rate, some of the subjects, especially in the Humanities group. Difficulties in science teaching, it is conceded, will continue for some time but if the opinion of men like National Professor Satyendranath Bose is any guide-line, the difficulties are not as insuperable as the opponents of the idea make them out to be. On the other hand, if we refrain from taking a decision here and now in favour of making the regional languages the media of instruction up to the University level, scholars would lack the motivation of writing original text books in the regional languages or even undertaking translations of foreign standard works. It is possibly for this reason that the Government of India have undertaken to spend several crores of rupees—one crore of rupees (Rs. 1,00,00,000) for each State—for promoting and subsidising such translation work and/or providing incentives to authors for writing original books on different subjects in different regional languages. Naturally, as royalties from such books would not amount to much, because of limited markets, it



is hoped that a State subsidy would compensate for the missed royalties. The difficulty is that it is not always easy to get an author made to order. We suspect, rather, that for a pretty long time there would continue to be books in a vain search of authors.

Even if it is agreed that books of the requisite standard can be written to somebody's orders, the policy must logically extend to producing journals, magazines, monographs, research papers etc., of which there is an endless output in every well advanced intellectual community. As against this over-growing literature which, in an advanced country, satisfies the needs of every kind of specialist, regional efforts in India are, as matters stand, now, bound to be—with a few honourable exceptions—of a sub-standard quality ; and it would be a long, long time before India's literary and scientific output can catch up with that of Europe or America. Even then, such efforts are likely to be limited to only a few regional languages of India which are more or less sufficiently developed to be used for such a task. Hindi, I am afraid, may not be one of them. It cannot, as linguists know, compare with Bengali or Tamil in linguistic standards. If, therefore, Hindi, or any still more inadequate medium, is used for the purposes of higher education, it could only be on the basis of (i) depriving the teachers as well as the students of the benefit of efficient teaching because of the use of sub-standard text books or (ii) diluting the regional language itself by copious and unrestricted use and interpolations of foreign words, phrases, idioms and even whole sentences—almost creating an Indian Esperanto and passing it off as a regional language. Remember, we are not speaking of the common people or the unlettered mass ; but of educated people who are proceeding to the highest degrees that a University can offer ; and yet we are straining every effort to downgrade our educational level when there is always available a means of access to a rich storehouse of knowledge and wisdom provided we are not too squeamish or too patriotic (in a rather perverted way) about the medium of instruction, at least at the graduate level.



VII

The Three-Language Formula

The three-language formula is the response of a considerable section of the academic world to the language question in relation to school and college education. It has since received the imprimatur of the Union Ministry of Education. It means that the school curriculum should henceforth provide for the teaching of at least 3 languages.

There is, of course, nothing novel in this proposal. Even half a century ago, an Indian student was learning three languages, namely, the regional language, English and Sanskrit. What is novel to-day is the proposed replacement of Sanskrit by Hindi. In fact, the replacement had already taken place in several States before it was taken up on an all-India basis. The three languages now proposed are :

- (1) *The mother-tongue, or the regional language*, which should be the medium of instruction throughout the school course.
- (2) *Hindi*, or where it is already the mother-tongue, or the regional language, any other Indian language, for national integration.
- (3) *English*, as a world language, in order that the student may qualify for studies at the highest level. It should be an academic link language.

The language question, even at the academic level, is bound up with the larger question of an official or national language. That is the reason why, though our immediate field of study is education, we had to present the main lines of linguistic controversies that are dividing India, in the preceding few sections. The fact that there is a strong opposition lobby against the ousting of English, and its replacement by Hindi as the official language of the Union, or as a medium of instruction up to the highest stages of education, post-graduate, research and professional, has been responsible for the emergence of the three-language nostrum. If the non-Hindi-speaking States were asked to decide on a two-language system, Hindi would probably have found no place among the languages to be taught at the secondary level. Compulsory teaching of Hindi is now thought to be a good idea for national integration ; and this could be done only in a three-language scheme.



Needless to add, the three-language scheme enjoys powerful support. Nearly twenty years ago, the Radhakrishnan Commission had stated their view that "pupils at the higher secondary and university stages will have to know three languages".⁹ The scheme which is now known as the "Three-Language Formula" was actually devised by the Central Advisory Board of Education in 1956 and was somewhat simplified and approved by the State Chief Ministers' Conference held in 1961. The Education Commission (1964-66) after discussing the formula recommended what it calls "a modified or graduated three-language formula" to include:¹⁰

- (1) The mother-tongue or the regional language;
- (2) The official language of the Union or the associate official language of the Union so long as it exists; and
- (3) A modern Indian or foreign language not covered under (1) and (2) and other than that used as the medium of instruction.

The Commission thus explains the "implications" of the modified formula :

"At the lower primary stage only one language should be studied compulsorily—the mother-tongue or the regional language, at the option of the pupil. In the case of the vast majority of pupils, the language of study at this stage will be regional language which will be also their mother-tongue. Some children belonging to the linguistic minorities may also opt for instruction in the regional language, because of its great advantages; but this cannot be forced on them, and they have the right under the Constitution to have facilities provided for their primary education through their mother-tongues. The State Government should, therefore, provide primary schools teaching through the mother-tongue for the children subject to the usual condition approved by the Education Ministers' Conference (1949) that the minimum number of such children should be 10 in a class or 40 in a school. It is desirable that such children should have a working knowledge of the regional language also. Facilities for its study should, therefore, be provided, on an optional basis, for class III onwards. We do not favour making the study of the regional language compulsory at this stage for children of linguistic minorities as has been done in some States at present. We also are not in favour of teaching English as a second language at this stage.

"At the primary stage only two languages should be studied on a compulsory basis : (1) the mother-tongue or the regional language, and (2) the official or the associate official language of the Union. For almost all the pupils in the Hindi areas and for a majority of them in the non-Hindi areas, English will probably be

⁹ University Education Commission's Report (1948) p. 321.

¹⁰ Education Commission Report, p. 192.

the second language but a large proportion of the pupils in non-Hindi areas may also opt for Hindi. In addition, facilities should be provided for the study of a third language on an optional basis, so that the children in the Hindi areas where mother-tongue is not Hindi and the children in the non-Hindi areas who have taken English as the second language may study the official language of the Union, if they so desire.

"At the lower secondary stage (classes VIII-X), a study of three languages should be obligatory ; and a student should be under an obligation to study either the official language of the Union or the associate official language which he had not elected at the higher primary stage. By and large, the pupils in the Hindi areas will study Hindi, English and a modern Indian language while the vast majority of pupils in non-Hindi areas will learn the regional language, Hindi and English

"It is true that English will be the most important library language to be studied at this stage. We, however, think that it is also necessary to encourage the study of other important library languages like Russian, German, French, Spanish, Chinese or Japanese.....

"In the higher secondary classes, which will serve largely as a preparatory stage for higher education, only two languages need be made compulsory and the students should have the option to select any two of the three languages studied earlier or a combination of any two languages taken from the following groups : (1) modern Indian languages ; (2) modern foreign languages ; (3) classical languages, Indian and foreign. There is of course no bar to a student studying one or more additional languages on an optional basis."¹¹

The formula, reduced in outline form, may be presented in the following manner :

A. Mother-tongue : Hindi	B. Mother-tongue : Regional Language (Other than Hindi)		
Language : to be taught in	Class	Language : to be taught in	Class
1. Hindi	I-X	1. Regional Language .	I-X
2. English	V-X	2. Hindi	V-X
3. A Modern Indian Language.	VIII-X	3. English	VIII-X

It is to be noted that, according to this scheme, a student will remain uni-lingual up to class IV, bilingual between classes V-VII and trilingual from class VIII onwards. The second point is that in a non-Hindi-speaking area, a child leaving school after completing class VII will not learn English at all while he will have learnt Hindi

¹¹ *Ibid*, paragraphs 8.35 to 8.39



for at least 3 years. If he leaves after completing class VIII (which represents the age-break at 14 up to which, under our constitutional imperative, education is to be compulsory), he will have just one-year's preliminary acquaintance with English (which it is very likely he will quickly forget) and four years of Hindi.

In contrast, a child in the Hindi-speaking area, leaving school at the end of class VIII will have had five years of English (in addition to his own mother-tongue) and a year of another Indian language. This one year of an Indian language will be as much of a farce as one year of English, but then a Hindi-speaking boy, if he manages to forget this other language (which he will most assuredly do), will not miss it so much as the other boy in the non-Hindi-speaking area who has missed his English. If one boy learns Hindi and English and the other boy learns, say, Oriya and Hindi, it is not difficult for any one to guess who gains.

If the three-language formula is at all to be accepted, it would serve the purpose of the formula better if it were so arranged that no language was taught for less than 3 years before the student was in a position to leave the school, say, at the age of 14. This means that the third language should start at Class VI if not earlier. Also, in the non-Hindi-speaking areas, it is not necessary to provide for more than 3 years of Hindi. This language, with which most people already have some acquaintance, could be learnt fairly well in three years' time. Linguists may consider whether in the non-Hindi-speaking areas, the position of English and Hindi should not be reversed with the following modification : English is to be taught from Class V and Hindi (or a modern Indian language in Hindi-speaking areas) from Class VII, if not Class VI.

There is a strong body of opinion, however, which is critical of the three-language formula. If the suggestion of Chairman Kothari of the U.G.C. is to be accepted, there is going to be in the near future a tightening up of standards. If to this is added the burden of learning three languages, it is likely to interfere with the students' performance in the other subjects. As, according to the Education Commission's recommendation, a substantial percentage of students completing their secondary course would be siphoned off to technical training or vocational pursuits, the teaching of a third language would prove an unnecessary waste of effort, out of proportion to the

benefit likely to be received by the learners. The concrete suggestion, therefore, is that the third compulsory language—Hindi in the case of non-Hindi areas—should be dropped. It could, perhaps, be retained as an additional elective subject. Thus the only languages to be taught on a compulsory basis should be two—the mother-tongue (or the regional language) and English. Also, the teaching of English, if it is to be taught well—and it should be taught well—should start early, preferably from class V.

Strangely enough, the Policy Resolution accepted by the Union Cabinet on July 17, 1968 steers clear of these important details. It decided not to specify the stages at which the different languages are to be introduced. The task will now fall on the State Governments. The three-language formula has, of course, been endorsed by the Union Cabinet, with a slight variation. While the three languages of the formula, namely, the mother-tongue (or the regional language), Hindi and English (and for those whose mother-tongue is Hindi, a modern Indian language) are retained, it is recommended, however, that the modern Indian language should preferably be a South Indian language. I believe it would not be far wrong to say that the policy of the Government of India continues to be a strange amalgam of regionalism and nationalism. The ambivalence of the Government is further shown by its attitude towards Sanskrit. The importance of Sanskrit is more fully discussed in the next section of this chapter. The Government, in its policy statement, while laying emphasis on the study of Sanskrit as "a potent factor of emotional integration in the country" does not go beyond suggesting that facilities should be provided for teaching it in school. Does it indicate a "feeler" in favour of a four-language formula?

VIII

The place of Sanskrit

It is, perhaps, expecting too much in the midst of the present linguistic conceits in the country that Sanskrit should be given the status of the national language, *par excellance*. There is, indeed, a sizable section of our people who have explained why it should



be so. In fact, one could reasonably guess that the three-language formula would be accepted by a large majority of our people, on a free and impartial vote, if the third language be Sanskrit.

The importance of Sanskrit derives from many factors. It had for many years, and till recently figured as a subject—in many cases, as a compulsory subject—in the school curriculum. It is not a regional language so that even if adopted as a national language, it would not confer any special advantage on any particular region or area (as in the case of Hindi). It has its roots in the soil, unlike English which is treated as a foreign tongue ; in fact, it is a root-language (so far as India is concerned) of the Indo-European linguistic complex. The Sanskrit alphabet, it is now held, is derived from Brahmi script which had connection with the signs of the Mahenjodaro seals.¹² This alone is evidence enough to establish the priority of Sanskrit over all the Indian languages barring the tribal languages of the Austro-Asiatic group. This is what the late President Rajendra Prasad said : "Sanskrit has not only been the treasure-house of our past knowledge and achievements in the realm of thought and art, but it has also been the principal vehicle of our nation's aspirations and cultural traditions, besides being the source and inspiration of India's modern languages." And yet, the recognition that it had commanded during the days of the British Raj when it was a compulsory language in school (at one time up to the First Arts standard), is now sought to be withdrawn from this language and even a three-language formula cannot accommodate it !

The post-independence policy relating to Sanskrit reveals a chequered course. In West Bengal, for instance, the Board of Secondary Education removed Sanskrit from the list of compulsory subjects and made it an elective subject and that also with Hindi as the alternative. This sparked off a good deal of agitation, in which many leading men and associations of Sanskrit scholars took part. Even the Sanskrit Commission appointed by the Government of India in 1950 under the chairmanship of National Professor Suniti Kumar Chatterji was constrained to observe that in the course of its tours it "could see a feeling of regret and disappointment among the people that, while no positive steps

¹² *Vide* The Census of India, 1931 (J. H. Hutton), Vol. I, Part I, chap. X.

have been taken for helping Sanskrit, the measures undertaken in respect of other languages have had adverse repercussions on it", and added that the ultimate result of this "have been that Sanskrit has not been allowed to enjoy even the status and facilities it had under the British Raj". In West Bengal, an attempt was made in 1960 to restore Sanskrit, at least partially, to its previous position in the school curriculum. A Committee under the chairmanship of Justice Sambhunath Banerjee recommended that Sanskrit (or any other classical language) should be taught as a compulsory subject to all students from class V to class VIII after which it should be a compulsory subject in the Humanities group and elective for the other groups. This recommendation was adopted by a majority votes, 9 voting for and 4 against. The supporters included among others, men like Suniti Kumar Chatterji, Srikumar Banerjee, Gourinath Sastri and J. C. Dasgupta while those who opposed it included Satyendranath Bose, Sisirkumar Mitra, Sasibhushan Dasgupta and Anathnath Basu. The scheme, however, fell through due to a technical objection. Ultimately, a compromise formula was evolved which was accepted by the West Bengal Board of Secondary Education. Under this scheme, Sanskrit was to be taught to all students in class VIII only, while students of the Humanities Group would study it as a compulsory subject up to class XI. This was a curious suggestion, to say the least.

Does Sanskrit deserve this treatment? There is so much difference between profession and practice on this matter in India that one is apt to ascribe it to a sort of "split-consciousness." And yet Sanskrit has never suffered from lack of support from distinguished savants, Indian and foreign, but today it is one of the most neglected branches of study even in India, its homeland. Even foreign scholars and linguists have expressed their unqualified admiration for this language. William Jones thought that structurally Sanskrit was "more perfect than Greek, more copious than Latin, more exquisitely refined than either". Its importance as a basic factor of India's culture and humanistic traditions has also been freely recognised. Jawaharlal Nehru says in his *Discovery of India*:

"If I was asked what is the greatest treasure which India possesses and what is her finest heritage, I would answer unhesitatingly—it is Sanskrit language and literature and all that it contains. This is a magnificent inheritance, and so long



as this endures and influences the life of our people, so long the basic genius of India will continue."

In another place, Nehru says : " Hardly any language in the world has played a part in the history of a race which Sanskrit has. It was not only the vehicle of the highest thought and some of the finest literature, *but it became the uniting bond of India, even though there were political divisions* ". Dr. A. N. Jha, speaking at the Convocation of the Banaras University (January 1, 1969) pointed out that the language that was introduced in India 2,500 years ago was the language that served to unite this country during the reign of Emperor Ashoka. Today the Ashoka Pillar is the emblem of India's national unity and sovereignty but not Sanskrit, the language that united India during the Emperor's regime.

The Secondary Education Commission (1954) had also observed : " To the bulk of Indians, Sanskrit, which is the mother of most Indian languages has always appealed both from the cultural and religious points of view.... There is a great deal to be said in favour of the view that the study of the language should be promoted." Presumably, by promotion, Lakshmanswamy Mudaliar did not mean relegation. But if the report of the Education (Kothari) Commission (1964-66) represents the latest thinking on the subject, then presumably Sanskrit has no role to play in future India, even in the field of humanistic studies, for the only concession which the Commission allows to Sanskrit appears is to make it an optional subject (that is, in addition to the three languages prescribed) at the lower secondary stage—in fact, this is contained in an inconspicuous parenthetical note ; it may also come in under " any classical language " as one of the two languages provided in the proposed higher secondary course along with other alternatives.

I have quoted Jawaharlal Nehru. It would be no less relevant to quote Gandhiji who lends point to our discussion. He says :¹²

" I quite agree that the study of Sanskrit is sadly neglected. I belong to a generation which believed in the study of the ancient languages. I do not believe that such a study is a waste of time and effort. I believe it is an aid to the study of modern languages. This is more true of Sanskrit than any other ancient language so far as India is concerned, and every nationalist should study it because

¹²For some of the quotations used in this section I am indebted to Professor D. C. Chakrabarty Sastri of the Rabindra Bharati University and his book " Jana- Siksha-O- Sanskrita " (1967).

it makes a study of the provincial languages easier than otherwise. It is the language in which our forefathers thought and wrote."¹⁴

The last sentence of the extract quoted above appeals to sentiment. We cannot simply write off sentiment as a bad debt which we owe to our forefathers. What worth is Indian unity if we remove the sentimental basis of our attachment to our country, its traditions, its history and its culture? Sanskrit has been a continuing bond of Indian unity.¹⁵ Even the hard-headed historian, K. M. Pannikar, says : "The unity of India will collapse if it ceases to be related to Sanskrit and breaks away from Sanskrit and the Sanskrit traditions. Sanskrit alone has the pre-eminence which Hindi could never claim over the great regional languages enabling her to maintain and uphold in every region of India the supreme claim of Indian unity." Kailashnath Katju, speaking at Puri in March, 1959, declared without any equivocation that : "As a layman, if I were bold enough to hazard an opinion, my first impulse would be to consider the claims of Sanskrit as our national language." The Sanskrit Commission has gone farther and stated : "It was the inspiration from Sanskrit which had led to the establishment of the Indo-European world and had brought in a new conception of history. On a study of Sanskrit and its sister languages, the basic unity of the Indo-European people has been, to some extent, established." To forge the bonds of our national unity without Sanskrit is almost like playing Hamlet without its central character.

Finally, it may be pointed out that if any Indian language can stake a claim with English as a language with international prestige, that language is undoubtedly Sanskrit. It was actually, at one time, the language of inter-communication between India and the world. Scholars like Rahul Sankrityana have found a good deal of evidence of the spread of Sanskrit studies in Europe and Asia. Professor

¹⁴ *Harijan*, 23-3-1940.

¹⁵ What about South India ? Let Pattabhi Sitaramayya give the answer : "To us, in South India, I do not see how we shall stand to lose by recognising Sanskrit as the national language. We can understand Sanskrit better than Hindi and other derivatives of Sanskrit." According to him, there is 60 per cent. Sanskrit admixture in Telugu while in Malayalam whole *Samasas* of Sanskrit are incorporated.



D. N. Chakrabarty of the Rabindra Bharati University has reminded us in his book *Janasikshā O Sanskrita* that ancient China was a big centre for the study of Sanskrit. The well-known Bodhiruchi Math accommodated 700 *bhikshus* (Buddhist mendicants), learned in Sanskrit and that they edited a Sanskrit-Chinese lexicon. The famous Chinese traveller, Hieuen Tsang, had adopted the Indian name (in Sanskrit) *Mokshācharya Mahāyānadeva*, while other travellers to India like Megasthenes, Fa-hien and Alberuni also were learned in Sanskrit. Even as far apart as Mongolia and Peru, one would get intimate glimpses of the contact of these areas with Sanskrit. Lopez even writes that "Every page of Peruvian poetry bears the imprint of the Ramayana and Mahabharata."¹⁶ Dewan Chamanlal has also produced evidence of the spread of Sanskrit and its culture in South America in the past. Finally, as the Sanskrit Commission observed :

"Sanskrit by its origin and its basic character links us to the West. But it has been no less a potent bond of union for India with the lands of Asia—with Serindia or Central Asia of ancient and mediaeval times where the cultures of China and India had a common meeting place ; with Tibet, with China, and the lands within the orbit of Chinese civilisation—Korea and Japan and Vietnam ; and above all, in the lands of farther India—Burma and Siam, Pathet Lao and Cambodia and Cochin China or Champa and the area of Malaya and Indonesia.... In all these lands, Sanskrit found a home for itself as the vehicle of Indian thought and civilisation which flowed out into them as a peaceful cultural extension, from the closing centuries of the first thousand years before Christ."¹⁷

Professor Chakrabarty also quotes the opinion of the historian Will Durant who speaks of Sanskrit as "the mother of Europe's languages". He has also quoted the views of many European scholars like William Jones, F. Maxmuller, Monnier Williams, H. H. Wilson, Cosma De-coros (who finds that "the structure of Sanskrit is most analogous to the Hungarian") and others.

I am afraid I am violating the limits of space, if not of patience (of the reader). Indeed, there is hardly any necessity to be so elaborate in the defence of Sanskrit which stands absolutely on its

¹⁶ Lopez : *Le Races Aryans de Peru*, quoted by D. N. Chakrabarty, *op cit.* p. 37.

¹⁷ Report, Sanskrit Commission, p. 74.



own merits. The onus is really on those who oppose Sanskrit. What possibly could be their line of criticism ? Let us see.

Is it because Sanskrit is a "dead" language ? Yes, if the number of actual speakers in this language is any criterion. Barely 2,500 persons have been enumerated in the last Census who speak Sanskrit. A national language should be a "living" language.

It must be agreed that there is considerable force in this argument. It may even be regarded as conclusive. It is a fact that very few people converse in this language. It cannot, therefore, be made a link language. Nor can it be made the national language because it would put almost everybody at a disadvantage. The same argument may be used against making it the official (or associated) language. It is in other words, very much a *dead* language.

Fortunately, Chapalakanta Bhattacharyya, M.P., from West Bengal, in his speech at the Indian Loka Sabha on November 22, 1963, has replied to these points. He considers these points as "superficial" and points out that even now Sanskrit plays a vital role in the life of the people of India and cannot, therefore, be regarded as a dead language. As regards its possibility of being used as the official language of India, he pointed out that the official language is the language of the intelligentsia and that even English is spoken or understood by a small minority of the population. On the contrary, he quoted William Jones who, after extensive researches in 1786 came to the conclusion that for a long time Sanskrit was the language of administration for the courts and used for other official purposes in India. The Radhakrishnan Commission also found that Sanskrit was for a long time the *lingua franca* of the world of learning in India. It may be mentioned in this connection that when Poet Tagore received the degree of Doctorate in Literature, *honoris causa*, from the Oxford University, in August, 1940 the citation, as was the custom at that ancient seat of learning, was in Latin. Poet Tagore, in his reply, addressed them in Sanskrit, the language of India's hoary civilisation and culture, beginning—

Bhavanta Ukshatirtha-Viśvavidyālaya-Pratibhuvah ! (translated as "Delegates from Oxford University !") and delivered the rest of his oration in that language. Still more significant was the Soviet address of welcome presented to President Rajendra Prasad when he visited Leningrad on June 24, 1960, in course of his goodwill tour

to the U.S.S.R. The address was composed in Sanskrit by Professor Kolyanov, addressing the President as “*Mahāmānya-Rashtrapati-Mahodaya Paramasreshtha-Srimān Rājendraprasād*”, and ended with “*Ipsitatithibiseshāya Namonamoh*”, finally concluding with two Sanskrit couplets.¹⁸

If the view of a classical language being unsuitable for use as an official or national language is weakened in consideration of the arguments set out above, Sanskrit would still be out of court as a language in a scientific-technological age. Well, the answer to this is simple. It is because of certain historical reasons that the cultivation of the Sanskrit language or research into the vast storehouse of its literature has suffered an eclipse. It *appears to be dead* as a patient appears to be under an anaesthetic. This anaesthesia has been produced by several centuries of neglect and by the withdrawal of State support from it. Yet we see that the religious ceremonies of the millions of Hindus are still conducted in Sanskrit. Our State motto is “*Satyameva Jayate*”; that for All-India Radio is “*Vahu-jana Sukhāya vahujana hitāya*,” the motto for the Speaker of the Loka Sabha is “*Dharmachakra-Pravartanāya*” while at the entrance to the Loka Sabha house is inscribed : “*Na sā sabhā yatra na santi Vriddhāḥ. Na te Vriddhā je na vadanti dharman.*” With the requisite intellectual curiosity, it would not have been difficult to discover learned works (in Sanskrit) in grammar, philosophy, political science, astronomy, mathematics, medicine and other sciences. In fact, even now, as we are in search of *paribhāshā*, that is, equivalents in different languages of technical terms, we have to rummage the vast storehouse of Sanskrit works for discovering such equivalents, for hardly have any of the living languages of India reached that linguistic sophistication as Sanskrit. Our Constitution has also enjoined that in the development of Hindi as a medium of expression, it shall be the duty of the Union Government to secure its enrichment by drawing for its vocabulary, *primarily* on Sanskrit, and *secondarily* on other languages.

In these circumstances, it is quite a modest demand that, in a three-language scheme, Sanskrit should be, without question, the third language, to be compulsorily taught in our school course.

¹⁸ For the full texts of the addresses, *vide* D. N. Chakrabarty, *op. cit.* pp. 59-62.



In non-Hindi speaking areas, Sanskrit would thus replace Hindi. Hindi-speaking areas would also be relieved of the necessity of providing for the teaching of another modern Indian language in schools, that is, if Sanskrit is made a compulsory third subject in schools. After 10 or 20 years, there should be an Indian language sufficiently developed to take the place of English as a compulsory language in the school curriculum. It is almost certain that that language would be Hindi, assuming that it reaches that stature and standard. In fact, more than one Indian language might reach this standard. Meanwhile, it is to be suggested that every secondary school should provide for Hindi or another modern Indian language as an *optional* or *elective* subject.

IX

The Medium of Instruction

The Education Commission's proposals regarding the "medium of education" highlight another area of controversy among academic as well as non-academic circles. There is near-unanimous agreement that the medium should be the mother-tongue (or the regional language) so far as the primary and secondary stages are concerned, though here also there is a small area of controversy relating to the English-medium schools. The major controversy is, without doubt, related to under-graduate and, more particularly, to post-graduate teaching and research. The Commission, in proposing that the mother-tongue or the regional language should be the medium of education up to the highest stage, made two important reservations. In the first place, it emphasised the need for "careful preparation" for the purpose, and secondly, it would leave to the "University system" to determine both the manner and the time of transition. Apart from these reservations, the Commission has considered it "educationally unsatisfactory" for a University to permit an examination to be taken through the medium of the regional language while classroom instruction continues to be given in the medium of English. In other words, the Commission proposes rightly that the language of the examination and of instruction should be the same.



The Commission, however, points to one difficulty. The use of English as the medium of instruction in the Universities is linked with its use as the language of administration. "So long as the prize-posts in administration," the Commission points out, "go to students who have a good command over English, it will not be surprising if a substantial proportion of students continue to prefer education given through it." This observation shows that the language question cannot be decided compartmentally. In any case, as the Education Commission views it, the medium of higher education is closely connected with the question of the official language. Since most of the State Governments are now committed to the use of the regional language of the State as the official language, it means that the apprehension of the Commission may prove baseless and that it will not be difficult, on the ground of the incompatibility of the regional language functioning as the medium of education and the use of Hindi (or English) as the official language of the State, to switch over to the regional language as the medium of instruction up to the highest stages of the educational process. Finally, the Commission is careful to point out that its proposals are not intended to eliminate English. In fact, it declares that even if the regional language becomes the medium of education up to the highest stage of University education, English "would still continue to play a vital role in higher education". The Commission further lays down that no student should be considered as qualified for a degree, in particular a Master's degree, unless he has acquired a "reasonable proficiency in English or some other "library language." This would mean, the Commission says, that teachers in higher education should be bi-lingual "in a sense that they would be able to teach in the regional language and in English, and all students (and, particularly post-graduate students) should be able to follow lectures and use reading materials in the regional languages, as well as in English."¹¹

There is at present hardly any scope for second thoughts on the matter. The Government of India appear to have made up its mind about the "inescapable and irreversible" decision to use the regional

¹¹Report of the Education Commission (1964-66), pp. 291-92.

languages as the medium up to the University stage, the only task of the Centre now being "to introduce an element of order" into the process.²⁰ According to India's Education Minister, 35 out of 70 universities have already allowed the regional language to be used as the medium of examinations. The question is now about the speed and orderliness of the change.

A suggested three-year limit for effecting the switch-over to the regional language as the medium of education up to the post-graduate level provoked a near crisis in the Union Cabinet. It led to the resignation of one of the most respected members of the Cabinet, M. C. Chagla, former Education Minister, and at the time of his resignation, India's Foreign Minister. His views, naturally, could not be lightly dismissed, particularly as he was committed to the position that "Hindi must ultimately replace English and play the unifying role that English plays to-day". We are, however, not here concerned with what might be in the womb of the future, whether we should have Hindi or some sort of an Esperanto, or continue to use English when the high fever of linguism leaves the national body politic. The nation's concern is with the immediate import of the policy of a rapid switch-over to the regional languages as the medium of higher education on the educational system as a whole. It is in this context that the following points made by Chagla in his letter of resignation to the Prime Minister deserve special consideration (the paragraphing as well as the numbering of paragraphs is mine) :

1. The change-over must be gradual and must not impair educational standards. Till Hindi takes the field, "the teaching of English should be strengthened and not allowed to recede into obscurity."
2. The time-limit proposed for the change-over (5 years for under-graduate and 10 years for all stages) is "hopelessly unpractical and unrealistic."
3. It is not through a crash programme of translation but original work that a language is developed. Such work cannot be produced overnight.
4. What will happen to excellence (of University education) if teachers are asked to lecture in a language in which they are not proficient and with the help of shoddy books hastily produced to order?
5. What will happen to students whose mother-tongue is different from the regional language (particularly as in many cities we have different media of instruction to cater for a multi-lingual society)?

²⁰ The references are to the speech of Dr. Triguna Sen, Education Minister, Government of India, at the inaugural session of the Vice-Chancellors' Conference held at New Delhi, on September 11, 1967.

6. What will happen to teachers who are not conversant with the regional language? Most universities recruit professors on an all-India basis. Are these professors to be turned out?

7. An early and unprepared switch-over to regional languages will do harm to the study of science and technology. This is a scientific and technological age and the horizon of knowledge is expanding at an incredible pace. In science, apart from the text-books, the student has to keep pace with new discoveries; and this he can only do if he is familiar with the large number of scientific journals which are at present only published in English or other European languages. This means that a large number of scientific scholars must grow up who will be publishing their researches (in the regional languages) in journals and magazines. This would be a long and laborious process.

8. Thus, a sudden change-over from English to the regional languages "must result in a precipitous lowering of standards, more particularly in the field of science."

9. English, whether we like it or not, "has brought about administrative, academic and judicial unity." Under the proposed policy, the regional-linguistic bond (that is, English) which contributes so much to our unity, will be snapped. The mobility of professors and students will become impossible. Administration at the Centre and Centre-State relations will all receive a severe jolt from this policy.

10. The steps we are taking are irreversible. "In most matters, Government policy, if mistaken, can be corrected. In Education, it cannot." It affects millions of our people and a whole generation may suffer because we were more concerned with our present difficulties and pressures and did not look sufficiently ahead into the future.²¹

The immediate cause of the letter appears to have been the view expressed by Morarji Desai, India's Deputy Prime Minister, at the Law Minister's Conference held on the same day that the letter was addressed (August 31, 1967) urging a quick change to regional languages, even for judicial purposes. So far as Chagla's position is concerned, in view of his commitment to Hindi as a successor to English, the point at issue was the question of a time limit for the succession to take effect. In this connection, it would be fair to recall briefly the background of the present controversy.

The importance of the regional languages being the teaching medium in educational institutions had long been recognised. It has had the support of several Commissions, including particularly the Radhakrishnan and the Kothari Commissions, which had previously considered the question. It was also forcefully advocated by many Indians of eminence including Rabindranath Tagore whom the Education (Kothari) Commission quotes. The latter has also quoted the views

²¹ Letter to the Prime Minister, dated August 31, 1967 (released to the Press on Sept. 5, 1967). The resignation was accepted by the Prime Minister on September 5.

of the Emotional Integration Committee as well as of the national Integration Council. The former had recommended the use of regional languages as media of education "from the lowest to the highest stage of education" as a matter of (in the words of the Committee) "profound importance for national integration". The National Integration Council said (June, 1962) : "The change in the medium of instruction is justified not so much by cultural or political sentiments as on the very important academic consideration of facilitating grasp and understanding of the subject matter. Further, India's university men will be unable to make their maximum possible contribution to the advancement of learning generally, and science and technology in particular, unless there is a continuous means of communication in the shape of the regional languages between its masses, its artisans and its university men. The development of the talent latent in the country will also, in the view of the council, be retarded unless regional languages are employed as media of instruction at the University stage." The Education Commission agreed with these observations.²² In fact, there need be no dissent, in principle, from the substance of these views. The question that troubled Chagla and that agitates our educationists (as well as public men) is about deciding upon the change here and now or fixing a time limit for the change-over.

Nor would it be fair to make any individual member of the Cabinet—Morarji Desai or Triguna Sen in particular, the scapegoat for proposing a time limit. In fact the time limit had been proposed by the Education Commission itself. "The change-over should take place as early as possible", the Commission said, "and, in any case, within about ten years, since the problem will only become more complex and difficult with the passage of time".²³ The Commission was fully conscious of the fact that "A large programme of producing the needed literature in the Indian languages will have to be undertaken ; and adequate arrangements will have to be made for the training or re-training of teachers". Apparently, they thought that a period of 10 years would be just

²² Education Commission (1964-66) Report, p. 14 ; also see pp. 192-193.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 14, 649.



about sufficient for this purpose. Chagla, and indeed, all other critics of this formula, joined issue on this question of a time limit. In fact, it seems that the Commission itself did not seem to have been particularly rigid on the time limit for, as already pointed out, they distinctly laid down (Report, p. 291) that "both the manner and the time of transition would have to be left for decision to the University system". They, however, urged that we should "move energetically". The Education Minister, Dr. Sen, also re-iterated (at the Vice-Chancellors' Conference held in September, 1967) that the change must be gradual, allowing full scope for flexibility to Universities to suit their own needs, making it clear that he himself had never mentioned any time limit. "The criterion in each case", he was reported to have said, "should be that the change-over helps at every stage to raise standards". But caution, he said, should not be equated with delay. The Union Cabinet, however, at its meeting held on July 17, 1968, declined to specify any deadline for the introduction of the regional languages as the media of education at the University stage.

While this element of flexibility introduced in regard to the change-over is to be welcomed as a wise and statesman-like step, some of the suggestions made by the Education Minister—about the place of English, for instance—keeps the picture of the future linguistic set-up as misty as ever. His suggestion that the study of English should be "strengthened" side by side with the adoption (as the media of education) of the regional languages, together with his declaration that the weakening or elimination of English "would put us back to the eighteenth century", can hardly be regarded as a clear enunciation of policy with regard to the exact place that English should occupy in the curricular set-up of higher education in India. In particular, it fails to meet the criticisms made of the Government's language policy. It seems that the Government of India in formulating a National Policy on Education has, in the vital matter of the three-language formula, failed to give due weight not only to reason but even to the practical realities of the situation. The questions that keep on worrying are : Does the Government believe, in reason, that any of the major languages of India can be used as a medium for post-graduate, or even Honours teaching, in the foreseeable future, without detriment to standards ? Does

it believe, in reason, that if English is left to the position of a "library language", its teaching would not deteriorate further? Does it believe, in reason, that the provision of the teaching of Hindi as a compulsory language is really justified from the point of view of its linguistic excellence, or as a link-language, to be studied at the academic level? Does it hold it proper that a three-language formula should include Hindi and exclude Sanskrit? It is up to the Government to clarify these doubts which a large number of the critics of Government policy honestly entertain and about which they are intensely agitated. The main points of the Policy Resolution accepted by the Union Cabinet on July 17, 1968, are not likely to resolve the nation's doubts.

There is another major question to be answered. The Education Minister has stated, in so many words, that there should be two link languages in India. Parliamentary legislation has given effect to this dualism of the Government's language policy. According to the latest pronouncements English would continue to be the external link language of India while Hindi would be the internal link language. As a common language—language for the common people (ninety per cent. of whom in any case live and die in their respective districts of birth)—Hindi has certainly a claim. But a highly Sanskritised or Urdu-ised Hindi will be as much foreign to these people as English. For them, a simple version of Hindi is all that is necessary and it would be quite sufficient for ordinary transactions if the average Indian is taught to speak (and to write, when illiteracy is removed) Hindi words and phrases of everyday use, of which a competent Board of Lexicographers can easily prepare a list. Conversational classes may also be held at the school, for practice speaking. There is reason to hope that there would be no objection to this course. The opposition is mainly directed to the use of a single link-language—Hindi—for all-India purposes and to buttress its position by making it a compulsory subject in the school curriculum irrespective of its acceptability. It is necessary to repeat that the educated classes of India have already developed English as their link language. There appears to be no sound reason why the link language which, in any case, would concern a rather small percentage of our total population should not continue to be English and why we should spend a lot of money, effort and time



to learn another link language particularly when there is no bar for this other link language, Hindi, to be learnt the easier way.

The official policy, further, continues to be based on the view that the use of Hindi as an official-cum-link language would serve as a powerful instrument of national integration. If this were true, there should certainly be unquestioned support for this policy from all parts of India. The fact is that it is English that has integrated the Indian peoples into a nation, because it produced a class of Indians who spread out throughout the country and acted as the highpriests of Indian nationalism and unity. It put India on the map of progress. There is no doubt that it suffered from the stigma that it was the language of "the few who govern". To us Indians, it gave us the language that articulated our yearning for freedom. It gave us the language of science, of technology and of international understanding. Hindi, on the contrary, has already sown the seeds of disunity, of disintegration. Never was India so sharply divided as it is now over the issue of Hindi.

As I have stated, however, there is now hardly any scope for second thoughts. The language question, after all, is but part of a larger puzzle for the resolution of which our people are now desperately contending. A national educational policy has just been broadly spelt out. The people have to accept the compulsions implicit in such a policy. No doubt they will also be called upon to accept a new order of priorities. All that need be said now is a plea for hastening slowly but with sure steps and that there is need for an all-round improvement of standards including that of English which has sadly deteriorated in recent years. Nothing should be done that would lead to a further scaling down of standards. But it is good to remember that there is no finality in human affairs, particularly in a democracy. In the academic world, however, there is need for long-term planning because of its effects on generations yet unborn. Our reformers should not, therefore, do anything to queer their pitch.

X

English as a Functional Language

A language can be taught in two ways, as the language of literature and as a language in its functional aspect. When the professor

reads his Shaw or Dickens with his students, he not only introduces his young pupils to the glories of English literature and through it to the beauty, the charm, the resilience of the language itself as the vehicle of human thought in all its depth and subtlety, but also to English life, manners and customs. But when the student reads his economics or history or physics or chemistry in the English language, he has to face another aspect of the language : its functional aspect. The student learns his English through the teaching of these subjects in a way quite different from that in which he would go through his *Pygmalion* or the *Pickwick Papers*. If we now start teaching him economics or other subjects in the regional language and leave the English classes to the professor of English literature, our standard of English, far from satisfying the requirements of a world link language, would, in a large majority of cases, be reduced to a cram language, not even a library language. Are we heading for this outcome ?²⁴

A professor lecturing on economics or political science (in English) will, it is pointed out, contribute more to the functional command of English by his students than a professor teaching English literature alone. It is surprising how those who would like all the subjects other than English literature to be taught in the regional language do not realise the vacuum they would be creating in the teaching of the English language itself, and complacently assume that a student would improve his competence in English by reading a few selected poems or prose writings in the class, or learning to distinguish between a litotes and a euphemism. It is needless to add that under such circumstances the professor of English literature would have to bear a double burden of teaching the text as well as teaching the language. This would be an absurd call on his capacity or avocation with the result that neither would be taught well. If all subjects other than English were to be taught in the medium of a regional language, there would be necessity for producing a very large number of English teachers who would concentrate on language teaching and thereby, though in an unsatisfactory way, fill up a vacuum. Otherwise, the goal of tightening up the standard of English would remain a pious

²⁴ The point has been raised by a correspondent in *The Statesman* (Calcutta), October 25, 1967.



wish. Where are these teachers ? How long would it take to produce them ? What is to be done meanwhile, with the present generation of students and teachers ? Perhaps the difficulty would not be so much felt with the present generation of teachers ; most of them would probably have studied their subjects through the medium of English. They could at any rate help their students with English or other foreign terminology for technical concepts but one wonders what would happen when this generation would pass out and are replaced by an entirely new generation of teachers who themselves would have learnt their subjects in the regional languages up to the post-graduate stage and could therefore teach their subjects only in their respective mother-tongue, each with its own vocabulary of technical terms, to the utter dismay alike of translators and lexicographers. Some languages, however, in facing the new challenge might elect to be more prudent than heroic and continue to use foreign terms and phrases through transliteration. Some inevitable metamorphosis of the original words might take place in the process—a sort of linguistic refraction—due to phonetic or other difficulties. Some English phrases and words have been already adapted in this way ; and it would be a safe bet that many Englishmen would not recognise the parentage of such transmuted words.

In fact, this phenomenon is not peculiar to the Indian regional languages. Such transmutation takes place through intimate contacts between two or more languages even in the advanced countries of the world. It is not suggested that Indian regional languages should pass a self-denying ordinance and try to find a thoroughly indigenous equivalent for each technical term to be used. It is rather suggested that the teaching of the English language should go side by side with that of the Indian languages so that, through mutual give and take, words might come up and acquire the status of a technical term through specialised or sophisticated use, instead of hunting through the pages of our ancient literature to retrieve outdated jargon, or of hopefully presenting what have been aptly described by a critic as "bizarre synthetic coinages" (such, for instance, as the phrase "kanth-langoti", meaning a necktie). While our ancient literature does abound in technical terms, these are, in the first place, mostly out-of-use or would be largely unacceptable because of their highly Sanskritised base, that is, unless there is popular adaptation or impro-



visation ; and, in the second place, even after fishing out these terms, there would still be left a large field of scientific literature with any number of technical terms and idioms for which suitable equivalents have yet to be found in our regional languages. In this connection I may quote from a special article on "Importance of English for Indian Language" by P. B. Pandit published in *The Statesman* of October 25, 1967 (Calcutta edition).

"A technical term replaces long phrases, a complicated discourse, and its meaning is fixed by an agreement of definition which in science receives explicit formulation and strict adherence." All languages have technical terms : the jargons of fishermen and carpenters, of the smiths and weavers for instance ; in simpler societies, the usefulness of close approximation is limited ; as civilisation advances, the demand for closer approximation is felt and finer distinctions develop, as noticed in the discourse of a physicist or a biologist, a lawyer or a doctor.

"Scientific terms are, as their genesis shows, embedded in common language. Words like energy, mass, particle or force in English are common words ; with the growth of scientific knowledge, they have come to represent a very complicated discourse, they are a sort of abbreviation. The etymological meaning of those words hardly conveys their scientific meaning. When we want similar expressions in our languages we are really faced with a difficulty ; we do not have a body of literature in which the cumulation of meaning of these terms can be seen ; we lack scientific discourse in our languages."

What the writer says is, up to a point, true. What he omits to point out is that it is the long scientific tradition of the English (or other advanced European) language which has given precision to the terms that are now being used in scientific literature. A consensus has also developed on the extremely sophisticated use of not an inconsiderable body of scientific verbiage. The Indian languages have neither reached that scientific precision—either by way of denotation or by way of connotation—nor have they attained the sophistication of the European languages to meet the needs of scientific writing. Naturally, scientific terms have to be specially coined or adapted for use in the regional languages ; and one way of promoting such use is to make such words descriptive or self-explanatory, or to use compound words, without being cumbersome as far as possible. Such words would not be easy to find in the existing literature, or to coin if they are not. This is the reason why there is a general feeling that, at any rate to start with, if we must, we should continue to use the foreign terms in so far as they have been accepted for international use, in all scientific literature written in the Indian languages. A



saner counsel would probably be to wait for the further development of the Indian languages so as to give it time to absorb the scientific terminology of the West. Scientists as well as other specialists should be encouraged to engage in scientific or scholarly discourse in the regional languages ; to write books on science ; to produce scientific as well as other learned journals, in the regional languages. May be, in twenty or twenty-five years, a not inconsiderable mass of scientific writing by Indian authors writing in their own languages would accumulate which would help to build up a glossary of scientific terms acceptable to the profession. It is, as most scientists would agree, rather a distant goal.

There is another snag of which notice may be taken. In Europe and America, in spite of the diversity of its languages there is a general agreement on the precise meaning, connotation and use of technical words. In most cases, they are identical ; in the case of some, there is a concordance. In India, which is a polyglot country, where the number of languages spoken and written are more numerous than in any other country there would be the double difficulty of preparing a concordance of scientific terms to be used in the different languages of the country as well as of effecting a concordance with those in international use. The Indian Constitution prescribes it as the duty of the Union "to promote the spread of the Hindi language, to develop it so that it may serve as a medium of expression for all the elements of the composite culture of India and to secure its enrichment by assimilating without interfering with its genius, the forms, style and expressions used in Hindustani and the other languages of India specified in the Eighth Schedule, and by drawing, wherever necessary or desirable, for its vocabulary, primarily on Sanskrit and secondarily on other languages" (*Article 351*). Whether this prescription covers the need for preparing a common scientific vocabulary for all-India is not very clear ; for a word adapted for use in the Hindi language may not be quite suitable for use in, say, Tamil or Assamese, whereas a developed language such as Bengali may already possess a corresponding word in use. These difficulties point once again to the need for a more or less prolonged wait, to trust to the natural development of languages to fill up the vacuum that is causing so much avoidable headache to our administrators and educationists.

Finally, we have in process the emergence of a new class of elite arising out of the dual system of education (one through the medium of the regional languages and the other through the medium of English). This new class is not confined to the urban elite. Due to the impact of socio-economic factors, a new upper class has arisen in the rural areas, a good proportion of the leaders of which are known to be sending their boys to English medium schools. The increasing "urbanisation" of the countryside, the development of the suburban areas, the growth of industrial estates, the proliferation of road transport routes—all these will tend to accelerate the process. Some critics have drawn attention to the political implication of what is called "the grand alliance" between the upper and the middle classes in the cities and the "upper gentry" in the rural areas, indicating a new class-alignment. What we are concerned with here is the educational significance of this new development. The situation bristles with contradictions. One such contradiction is revealed in the fact that many of the ardent protagonists of the regional language formula are educating their own children in English medium schools. Is it a case of keeping up with the Joneses? or, an indirect admission of the academic superiority of these schools? If the rural upper class follow the mode, is it because otherwise they would be considered *déclassé*? In any case, it means a new demand for English medium schools. At present, apart from the Public Schools which present candidates for the School Certificate Examination, there are many other schools recognised by the State Boards of Secondary Education which provide for instruction through the medium of English. With the regionalisation of the medium of instruction, this latter type of schools will sooner or later have to switch over to the regional medium. But as long as the demand for education through English remains effective, it would inevitably seek a new channel: which would mean an increasing pressure on the Public Schools.

Now this development, in so far as it is linked up with the new social trend, ambivalent as it is, need to be watched carefully. With proper methods of language teaching and qualitative upgrading of secondary and higher secondary schools, this trend may, to a great extent, be checked. But that, again, is a question of time. It involves, in the first place, a re-assessment of the deficiencies of the existing



secondary schools with a view to their upgrading to a qualitatively higher standard. This does not merely mean the addition of a class or two at the top and the introduction of new curricular streams. It means that the reorganised schools should provide for increased amenities for the students such as ample playgrounds and extra-curricular activities. It should provide for more scientific methods of instruction. It should be strict in the enforcement of a code of discipline and at the same time provide for ample opportunities for the cultivation of the qualities of leadership. In the second place, it should try to maintain an atmosphere favourable for the pursuit of excellence, individual and collective. Thirdly, it should be cosmopolitan in outlook while maintaining the national ethos.

Naturally, all this cannot be achieved by mere wishful thinking. It is the first need of every national system of education to develop a perspective. Our lack of perspective is responsible for much of the patchwork which to-day goes by the name of educational re-organisation. The stakes are high, for the nation's future is involved. Unfortunately, much of our thinking is yet clouded with catchy sentiments with a high mass appeal ; or by an obscurantist attitude. Our judgment on the place of English in a national system of education should steer clear of both these pitfalls.



CHAPTER XXIII

STUDENT INDISCIPLINE

I

What is Indiscipline ?

Let us first ask ourselves a basic question : *What is Discipline ?*

Discipline in the general sense of conformism to accepted standards of behaviour poses more questions than it answers. Discipline can be valued for its own sake if we can establish that conformism is a virtue to be cultivated under all circumstances and that, conversely, any deviation from the accepted pattern of behaviour is intrinsically wrong. It is argued in favour of this view that discipline is part of the cosmic law and as such it has the sanction of a universal principle of Nature ; that without discipline, which implies a stable social order, there would be chaos which is antithetical to progress ; that society would soon be atomised if every individual were allowed to follow his own inclinations. On a deeper reflection, however, it would be manifest that this view of discipline would include rather too much than too little. It would cover the discipline of a gang of dacoits as much as the discipline of a police force or of the army barracks. It would take in its stride the conformism of a religious order as that of the helot to his Spartan master's will. On another view, however, such a concept of discipline would include too little rather than too much. For it is concerned only with its form, and not with its content ; it is equated with the externals of human behaviour and not with the inner springs of action. It is not concerned with that motivation of human conduct or that value judgment of society that sustains the concept on its moral side, and is content as long as the placidity of the surface is able to hide the treacherous undercurrents beneath. Somehow it loves to place the concept of discipline within the matrix of the *status quo*.

Now, in a democratic age, such a view of discipline would be categorically rejected on the obvious ground that it is opposed to



human worth and dignity. Any device that denies the sovereignty of the human will becomes suspect in a democratic regime. This does not mean the rejection of discipline as a tool, as a means to an end ; it means the rejection of discipline as an end in itself without reference to the validity or otherwise of the purpose of such discipline. We, therefore, do not admire the discipline of a gang of dacoits or of the Ku Klux Klan ; but we do admire the discipline of the army because the destiny of a country, the fate of millions, may depend on the effectiveness of such discipline. At the same time, it would not be difficult to understand that the strict discipline of the military organisation cannot be applicable to a body of artists or of university teachers ; or for that matter, to a body of students. A student's mind is like a flowering plant. It may be a rose, a jasmin or a rare orchid. It must be allowed to blossom in its own way. Society, in a general sense, the teacher more particularly, must water the plant, fertilise it, provide it with the conditions of its growth, and watch it grow with loving suspense. But one cannot graft a rose on the jasmin or *vice versa*. For the rose will grow into a rose, the jasmin into a jasmin. To that end it conforms to its own laws of growth, the discipline of its being. The means conforms to the end, and we must bestow proper care to see that it does. For therein lie the young mind's expectations of us, the passing generation, and our contingent duty to discover the discipline of its growing pains. To define this discipline, it would be wrong to go to the military barracks or to a Nazi concentration camp for an idea. We should not, because, in democracy, we cannot, avoid a clash of values. It is the only way to the discovery of truth. But ideas are one thing ; behaviour is another. In a democracy, we need not, we do not, quarrel with ideas. But we are vitally concerned, in the processes of a democratic society, to see that in the struggle among values, there is no attempt to immobilise reason or to coerce judgment ; that we do not use the methods of constraint, the methods of violence, to impose one set of values on another.

Modern India has travelled far from those days when the disciple, the student, literally sat at the feet of his teacher to receive the blessings of knowledge and wisdom from his dedicated master. A new kind of co-partnership is now in the making. What is wanting is a new definition of discipline that will not merely convey its popular

sense of conformism but correctly register the changes that have taken place in educational values. Otherwise, there cannot be a meaningful dialogue between those who are still attached to certain traditional values or concepts and others of the younger generation who by their profession and practice show themselves to be indifferent to, if not contemptuous of, such values. These two generations are separated by more than half a century of revolutionary changes in ways of living, in beliefs, in human relationships. The significance of these changes has to be understood to indicate the need for a correct approach to the understanding of new behaviour-patterns. The attempt must necessarily be tentative and of an exploratory nature for we are living in a dynamic society when almost each day sees the death of an ideal without heralding the birth of a new.

Would it, then, be wrong to say that discipline means something more than passive conformism ?

This is not an abstract question, far less an exercise in futility. We, and our students, have seen how, on occasions, our respected members of Parliament, of State legislatures, of civic bodies, grey-haired politicians, even teachers and professors, behave like denizens of the Inferno ! Such behaviour is often uninhibited by scruples of any kind. In so far as these instances of a new pattern of behaviour are not the results of momentary excitement or of an outburst of passion, but become almost a norm of collective life, it poses a problem of tremendous practical significance. These new patterns of behaviour are, surprisingly, often pre-planned and well organised. Assuming that man is a rational creature, there must be an explanation, based on reason, of—to put it mildly—the non-conformist behaviour-pattern of the present younger generation. So far as that section of the older generation who subscribe to the new pattern of thinking is concerned, it would not do to dismiss it as the case of new wine in an old bottle ; but—if we have to retain the metaphor—it would be pertinent to ask, with greater interest, from which vineyard of thought is this new wine brewed ?

It is clear that the attitude of mind that took discipline for granted must give way to a fresh attempt to rationalise it. May be, at one time, discipline had an intrinsic value, as a shock-absorber of social tensions. The values were laid down by the few, the law-givers; the rest followed. In the world of education, discipline as a principle of beha-



viour makes orderly progress towards the fulfilment of academic goals easier. Discipline is, no doubt, oriented towards the achievement of certain values. The emphasis is, however, not so much on the values, for values change, as on the *method*—the method followed—of achieving those values. Those who swear by those values may feel distressed if those values are disowned by others but the principle of discipline is not vitiated provided a disciplined approach towards the attainment of the new goals is considered equally essential. In short, if we believe in discipline, it matters little whether goals are similar or different. On the contrary, it is discipline which makes it possible for differing streams of thought to co-exist and meet on the plane of reason and good sense. Democracy provides that opportunity and converts the dead conformism, for instance, of autocratic regimes into a creative discipline which through a free interplay of ideas builds up the great truths of life in a democratic society.

Our student community is, in one sense, the spearhead of progress because it has not yet been "broken" to the entrenched traditions. They have the questioning spirit, a protestant attitude against passive conformism, against values which hurt their sensibilities, thwart their attempts to grow, inhibit their desire to build a world of equal opportunities for all, free from all class distinctions, of antedated traditions or distinctions based on privilege unrelated to functions. Secondly, the students of to-day, an uncomfortably large number of them, are *disaffected*. To be disaffected is the way to being indisciplined. Let us, however, ask ourselves a simple, straightforward question : have they no call to be disaffected ?—and is dissatisfaction by itself an offence ? In short, there may conceivably be a situation when dissatisfaction becomes a contingent duty, a moral imperative. And if such situations are numerous and recurrent, it leads to conditions of "indiscipline" in so far as there will be men who are unwilling or unable to compromise with their traditional sense of values. Speaking of values, it may be no more than a historical coincidence that Indian independence arrived almost in the centennial year of the publication of the Communist Manifesto ; but if the young people feel that the message of independence is that all forms of exploitation must cease, that all forces that impede the fulfilment of the ideal of an egalitarian society must be removed, we, who have given ourselves a Sovereign Democratic Constitution,

cannot tell these young people that since they do not conform to the existing values, they are guilty of indiscipline. It is the principle of democratic discipline that ideas should be allowed to contend with ideas, values with values. If our students are disaffected, they share this disaffection with many of their elders too : but perhaps they are a little too oblivious of the immediate consequences of a violent action. Disaffection by itself cannot be condemned any more than non-conformism can.

Does this finding land us in a *cul de sac* ? What I am trying to suggest is that discipline in a changing world where values are not taken for granted is concerned with the *method* of approach towards a goal considered valuable rather than with the *goal* itself. In other words, the concept of discipline relates to the way in which a person attempts to reach his goal. The problem arises when he attempts to do it by coercing others through intimidation ; or turns grossly abusive ; or provokes disorder by preventing others from following their normal avocations. He may turn violent. He may damage property and threaten the safety of fellow human beings. He may even kill people ; and he may organise gangs for any or all of these purposes. Without quarrelling with his ultimate objective—we may even, in certain cases, go so far as to support it—we must certainly condemn, unequivocally and without dissent—such highly improper procedure to achieve it. For a student, such conduct will certainly be treated as acts of indiscipline and, in extreme cases, even attract the penalty of law.

Here we come to question another postulate of the situation which requires re-examination. If the question of discipline is to be defined with reference to the method of achieving a goal, is it also to be decided with reference to the *status* of the individual or group involved in the question ? To be more specific, does a student qualify automatically for immunity from the consequences of a serious act of indiscipline just because he is a student ? The postulate of the situation is that by common consensus he enjoys a certain measure of immunity. Even if, for a violent and reprehensible act, a student or a group of students is, or are, put under arrest and placed in lawful custody, the chances are that his or their release will be the first condition of settlement with, to put it mildly, the mischief-makers, or else that would be another point for nerve-racking agitation. And



so it becomes a term of settlement and all the arrested students are released irrespective of the gravity of their offence. Somehow nobody minds and everybody heaves a sigh of relief.

Now, if an act of indiscipline, particularly where it exceeds the bounds of civilised conduct or grossly interferes with the lawful activities of other citizens, is condoned by society, or if society turns the blind eye on it, it results in several highly undesirable consequences. In the first place, the withdrawal of the restraining influence of law makes it so much easier for students to use coercive methods to gain their object. It makes indiscipline pay. Secondly, the police force of a country, even when faced with a serious threat to law and order, is more or less immobilised and that creates a general sense of insecurity and helplessness among the people at large and this gives a definite encouragement to anti-social or lawless elements. Thirdly, such immunity may also be claimed by other sections of the people, for example cultivators, who have been evicted from land, workers who have been laid off, refugees who have somehow occupied other people's lands, and the like, so that the consequent paralysis of the arm of law remains as a perpetual threat to the foundations of the new democracy. It is the function of civil law to displace the law of the jungle. Unless we concede democracy's right to return to the Hobbesian State of Nature, through such compromises, the idea that law should not touch the student and the underprivileged would be as pernicious as that law should not touch the rich and the privileged. So far as the students are concerned, the attitude of society has become somewhat indulgent in the same manner as the doting aunt (*Mashi*) regards her wayward nephew. That the latter may someday have to climb up the steps of the scaffold¹ does not frighten her. Referring to an incident that had led to police firing, a political leader of some eminence is reported to have remarked : " If our children do wrong, we do not kill them, do we ?" The question is meant to carry its own answer. Yet there is a short poem by Tagore in which the father, a King, orders the execution of his own son because of a heinous offence committed by the latter. On a lesser plane, it is necessary to realise that punishment does not always

¹ We all know, don't we, the parable of Beni and his Aunt ?



ruin a boy : it may, on the contrary, make a man of him. It becomes the duty of society to wean him away from the path of indiscipline and to make him understand that the object he has in view has to be tested on the anvil of reason and that democracy provides the necessary mechanism not only for testing the soundness of his idea but for securing its acceptance in a peaceful and constitutional manner. Indiscipline lies in rejecting the path of reason for the path of co-ercion and constraint.

Actually, this is the phenomenon we in India are up against. In one sense it is part of the general restiveness of the post-war generation, of its rebellious mood. In the next chapter I shall have a few words to say about the "angry young men" of to-day. Whatever may have been the repercussions of this rebellious spirit of the young men and women of to-day in the West, in a developing country like India, it is a suicidal proceeding. This does not mean that there should be no protestant spirit. But the way of protest must not make the difficult path of Indian democracy which is still uncertain of its steps doubly difficult. The most disturbing feature of this mood of revolt is that those who affect it take the plea of a democratic right. In fact, they do not bother about the means if it is justified by the end. What is still more relevant is that they have thrown a new light on discipline—it is the discipline that stands for the single-minded pursuit of a common aim. The path to it is meant to be of secondary interest, for the path is not greater than the goal. They are, to say the least, a-moral and pragmatic. Actually they believe in the intimidation of reason in others. They nevertheless call themselves progressive. But theirs is the steamroller of progress, often crushing the rights of those who stand in the way because the latter, unbelievers in their cause, are necessarily "reactionaries". They themselves profess to be "progressive" because they wage an uncompromising war against the "re-actionaries". They also profess to be "democratic" because they are fighting for the down-trodden masses, the landless peasants, the exploited workers, the under-privileged proletariat. If the path they tread on is somewhat undemocratic, they just cannot help it : it is sufficient if they get the democratic support of their own comrades.

Sufficient, I feel, has been said to define the posture of the students whose activities have, for the last few years, highlighted the problem



of student indiscipline. It has now developed into a new movement invested with the glamour of a revolutionary creed. This movement, it must be added, is not confined to the followers of a single creed, though they are generally given the package-label of "Leftists". The so-called "Rightist" elements too have their followers among the youths of the country. The Congress Party, of course, has long been in the line, having been the main force for inculcating political consciousness among our students since the days of the Nationalist movement. At present, the "Left" parties provide the militant wing of the student political organizations, just as they have done at the labour front. Most of the acts of indiscipline arise out of the deliberately aggressive line adopted by the "Left" leadership.

What emerges from this discussion is a confusing picture of student involvement in politics. In addition to the major political parties, free India has thrown up a large number of splinter groups, each with its particular ideological slant and each with a more or less active youth wing. India has offered a home to each of these ideologies, without demur. Even the group that swears by the "thoughts" of Mao tse Tung is allowed complete freedom as long as it keeps within the bounds of law. If its youth wing, or that of other groups, indulge in acts of intimidation or violence, the offenders being young people, and students to boot, policemen on duty try to look the other way as long as they can, instead of catching them promptly by the arm and marching them off to the nearest thana. In such cases, what look like acts of indiscipline, not to speak of grave offences against the public order, are treated as youthful pranks which crave the indulgence of the community. There was also the doctrine of vicarious responsibility of the authorities whose anti-people policies are conveniently held to provoke such outbursts.

Even if we make concessions to these views, human society would, nevertheless, be reluctant to accept the theory of the end justifying the means. As already stated, no one in a democratic society would place an interdict on ideas, however wrong or misdirected they might be, provided that the path chosen to reach the target is a path that does not interfere with the equal rights of others to chalk out their own path or otherwise transgress the bounds of law. In other words, it is to be a path that would harmonise the means with the end without disturbing the rights of others. It is in this concept of



harmony that true discipline consists. Whatever disturbs this harmony or blocks the peaceful pursuit by other contending parties of their own respective objectives, should attract the displeasure of society. Anyone who disrupts or destroys the conditions necessary to the peaceful pursuit of studies at the centres of learning is guilty of a breach of discipline.

II

Students and Politics

In the preceding section, while looking for a new political philosophy of student indiscipline, special consideration was given to the political motivations of the student community. There are many other features that add grist to the academic mill of discontent and frustration. But the political factor is still the most important single factor that sets the behaviour-patterns of our students who stray from the beaten track.² As such, a brief reference to the more fundamental question—should students join in politics, and if so, what should be the nature of their interest—may be attempted, before we proceed to discuss some of the remedial measures proposed by several authorities, the University Grants Commission for example, to check indiscipline by striking down the causes of such indiscipline. These causes will be discussed in the next section of this chapter. Here our basic question is, should students participate in active political life ?

This is an urgent question affecting the student community of to-day. In a sense the question is academic for the answer has already been given by the student community itself. A sizeable portion, if not the majority, of our students take to politics as fish takes to water. This is because students of to-day have become much more

²A U.N.I. Press release, dated October 17, 1966, gives the information that student agitations in India arising out of grievances relating to academic life numbered only 6 of a total of 28 in 1963, 13 out of 100 in 1964, 29 out of 240 in 1965 and 15 out of 202 up till August, 1966.

politically articulate than their compeers were, say, 50 years ago. In those days, to be sure, there were occasions when students were " agitated " but cases of vandalism and violence, politically motivated, were extremely rare. It was in 1921 that the first call came from Gandhiji for active participation by the student community in the National Movement. " When there is War," Gandhiji said, " the poet lays down the lyre, the lawyer his law-reports, the school-boy his books." A War is an all-time exception. But in India, it was, at the time, a non-violent War, with a capital W, compared to which the petty acts of vandalism in which students indulge now look ridiculous, were it not for the damage caused to society, both in their objective and their mode of operation.

Another reason for this new development has been that opportunities for active participation by students in the political life of the country have greatly increased since the attainment by India of independence. It is no longer frowned upon by the powers that be ; rather it is encouraged directly or indirectly by the political bosses of the country. Still another reason is that the problems that afflict the national life of India have become so acute, complex and widespread that they could not but affect the sensitive sections of the student community, particularly as some of the problems affect them directly and intimately. The acceptance by the Government of socialist objectives adds another dimension to the problem. For the solution even of day to day problems, such as, of food, housing, education, medical care, etc. people have to look up to one or the other of the Government agencies under the control of popular Ministers. Frequently, the way to the solution of these problems lies through the corridors of political power. To be effective, it requires organised pressure through mass agitations. That students spoiling to satisfy their instinct of pugnacity would quietly step off the line of the agitators and deny themselves the glamour of political action is, under the circumstances, too much to expect.

This political involvement of a large section of students has had unfortunate repercussions on their academic life. It is this aspect of the question that worries the educationist. Frequent strikes, student demonstrations, organized unruly behaviour, large-scale defiance of authority, " charters of demands," rowdy deputations for the redress of grievances and so on, have set a pattern of beha-



viour largely modelled on that of militant labour. The question is, should the academic world whose exclusive function is to promote the advancement of learning and research requiring a quiet atmosphere and concentrated attention, and to develop certain basic qualities of character, tolerate the situation brought about by such aggressive political action ? Should students, in other words, be banned from actively participating in agitational politics ?

The form of the question thus put is meant to show that it is not the intention to keep the students, figuratively speaking, locked up in an ivory tower far above the currents and cross-currents of the stream of life flowing down below, though that was the sort of life prescribed for the learner in ancient India. Study was then likened to a *tapasya* calling for complete dedication to intellectual and spiritual pursuits. That is not possible, nor perhaps desirable, under modern conditions. In fact, the modern theory of education depends less on intuition and more on experience. As a future citizen of a socialist-democratic State, the young Indian will have to be keen students of India's political thinking and try to understand and interpret the events that are taking place around him—not in his own country only, but in other lands as well. In fact, this is one of the aims which the concept of General Education is meant to encompass³. But that is as far as the educationist is likely to go. No sincere well-wisher of students would ask them to forswear their primary obligations and turn into active, miniature politicians. The announcement is frequently made that : "Students of today are the leaders of to-morrow." All that the educationist would ask the students with an itch for leadership is : "Why not wait for that to-morrow ? Today you are supposed to be students. And not all of you may want to be leaders of only one variety : political. At least some of you may want to be leaders in the fields of trade, commerce and industry, in scientific research, in fields of thought. Suppose you pass out as engineers or technologists. You may not have the inclination, far less the time, for political leadership, in the days ahead. So why spend your valuable time in pursuits that have

³ See Chapter XVI.



nothing to do with your preparation for leadership in so many fields of creative, nation-building activities—on the other hand, may it not ruin your future prospects ?” As for the general run of students, it is all the more necessary that they should utilise their limited time and opportunities to equip themselves for the hard battle of life that lies ahead instead of wasting their time in fighting unnecessary battles when there are better-equipped and better-trained generals and captains, the seasoned political leaders of the country, to lead the real fight against poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, ill health and social injustice on behalf of their countrymen for which the democratic State provides so many opportunities.

This boils down to an admonition.

It is easy to see that in the present atmosphere and temper, it would be a thankless task to make students understand the basic truth that it is absolutely against their own interests to engage in active agitational programmes, to call for frequent or prolonged suspension of studies, or to bring authority to ridicule or contempt. Not that they do not know the value of discipline. They very frequently give proof of the importance they attach to discipline in their own organizational set-up. On student unity (of their own brand), they do place a high value, and unity is a cardinal principle of discipline. How fervently one wishes that they would join in fostering a similar sense of discipline in the sphere of their primary interest—the attainment of their academic or scholastic objectives ! A large number of students, and surely all guardians, are interested in this aspect of their obligations than in their political loyalties. At the same time it must be repeated, this does not mean that they should keep themselves aloof from the mainstream of national life. They should take up for serious and objective study the political tendencies of the country, its political philosophy, its party system and the respective ideologies (including an impartial evaluation of the same) of the different parties, the implications of the political ideals that have moved masses of men throughout history, the governmental set-up, their own national history and the like. They are free to organize seminars, symposia, debating forums, speech competitions, mock parliaments, even attend election meetings and other public meetings where political and other vital issues are discussed. These are part of their preparation for life that awaits them on suc-



cessful completion of their studies. It is their duty to weigh the merits of different points of view, watch the clash of ideas, note the effectiveness as well as the ultimate or long-term consequences of collective action ; and they must foster among themselves an abiding love for, and an unassailable loyalty to, their own motherland and to the free and democratic Constitution that their own people have given to themselves based on the highest ideals that man can strive for. No human effort is free from error and if there is any feeling or finding that the Constitution should be amended so that it can better fulfil the hopes and aspirations of the new generation, the Constitution itself provides for the mechanism of a peaceful and democratic change, even of revolutionary changes, without bloodshed and without disrupting the educational system. It is, perhaps, necessary once again to repeat that democracy does not quarrel with ideas as long as its institutions are allowed to work in the atmosphere of a free society. Its concern, therefore, is with the *method* of realising the ideas. It counsels patience to the hotheads and promises a fair deal to the voice of reason and justice.

III

Students and Education

The main field of enquiry that interests us in this chapter is the study of student indiscipline in relation to education. Reference has already been made to some of the basic considerations, chiefly political, that have affected the sense of discipline of our student community. We now turn our attention to the causes of student unrest that arises out of the existing educational system, its consequences and possible remedies. As education in a society with socialist objectives does not function in isolation but in conjunction with the socio-economic factors, the field of the enquiry will have to be extended, upon relevant considerations, to include the impact of these other factors.

In this connection, we can hardly do better than refer to the analysis of student indiscipline in India given by two competent authorities, namely, Professor Humayun Kabir and the University Grants Commission. Several other attempts have been made at various



levels of authority but these have been more or less covered by the comprehensive treatment of the subject given to us by Kabir in his book *Education in India* (1955) and the report of the Committee appointed by the University Grants Commission in 1959 under the chairmanship of one of its members, Dewan Anand Kumar. To these we may now turn.

According to Kabir,⁴ the following factors are specially mentioned as causes "which contribute to students' dissatisfaction and indiscipline in the country" :

- A. *The loss of leadership by teachers.*
- B. *Growth of economic difficulties.*
- C. *Defects in the existing system.*
- D. *General loss of idealism.*

The main points made by Kabir in respect of each of these factors deserve a brief review.

The loss of leadership by teachers Kabir traces to (a) the fact that for various reasons teachers are not able to take an active part in the political struggle and to some extent lose the respect and esteem of their pupils ; (b) sweeping criticism and condemnation of the existing system of education as well as of teachers which have undermined the respect of the students for either ; (c) the loss in social status of the teachers as they belong to a lower income level with the result that those who join the teaching profession today are "mainly the rejects from other professions" ; (d) the poor pay of teachers which compels them to look for sources of subsidiary income and turns them into "frustrated and bitter" men which "not only detracts from their position in society but makes them positive sources of danger to the society" ; (e) the loss of personal contact between the teacher and the students due to "the disproportionately large increase in the number of students" ; (f) the fact that while the teacher has little control even over educational issues, the undue importance attached to examinations turns him into "a mere agent for preparing pupils for examinations" ; (g) the acceptance of paid private tuition on an almost commercial scale ; and (h) the deterioration in the quality of teachers both academically and otherwise.

⁴ See his *Education in New India*, Chapter 8.



As regards economic difficulties, the growing general economic distress has produced a situation which has made the people increasingly intolerant and this has also affected the student community in various ways. Unlike previously, as Kabir points out, many of the students are drawn from social strata which cannot provide them with minimum needs. The prospect that faces them at the end of their scholastic career is "grim". The majority of the students have no future plans and their education is "largely purposeless". Many go to colleges and universities because they have nothing else to do except looking for a job. On the other hand, expectations rise because they are studying in institutions of higher learning. And yet many of them may not have any special aptitude for, and interest in, higher studies. Altogether they suffer from "a sense of frustration which threatens to corrode their character and destroy the very basis of society". Added to a permanent feeling of financial insecurity are the miserable condition in which the vast majority of the students live. The spectacle of a small minority of people living in affluence makes them (the students) "rebels against the existing social order".

To these causes, Kabir adds, finally, certain defects in the existing system of education. Under the existing system of teaching and examinations, students tend to amass "information without understanding". Examinations become more a test of memory than of understanding or judgment. As a result, students tend to neglect their work throughout the whole academic year and expect to get through the examination through cramming. Further, the undue emphasis placed on the final examination encourages a tendency for adopting unfair means as a short-cut to success. That in our country a degree is an essential condition for employment except at the lowest levels induces many to enter universities who have neither the capacity for, nor interest in, higher education. The presence of such students "not only brings down standards and retards the progress of abler students but also creates fresh problems for the authorities". When students are interested in a subject, Kabir says, there is no problem of discipline in a class. Finally, the students, with little scope for initiative and freedom in curricular or even co-curricular activities have begun to question the authoritarian structure of the educational institution which "is often a rigidly stratified society where authority at each level demands unquestioning obedience". This spirit



of revolt has been "aggravated by the atmosphere of defiance engendered by the struggle for independence", and "once students got into the habit of breaking some laws" (the reference is to the civil disobedience movement), "they developed a spirit of disrespect for all laws". Much of the student indiscipline of today, Kabir concludes, "is an aftermath of the part they have played during the days of the national struggle".

Again, Kabir considers a general loss of idealism as a contributory factor of student indiscipline. The two World Wars made hatred "almost a religion", created sharp inequalities of wealth, lowered the general moral standards, encouraged widespread practice of vice and illegalities in all forms, which could not but affect the minds and attitudes of young people. The students themselves suffered from the loss of a seriousness of purpose. The spread of a materialistic ideology "contributed to undermine the sense of values by its insistence that ends justifies the means". The communist demand for social justice made an immediate appeal to them. This element of idealism in communism makes its indifference to accepted values all the more dangerous. Other reasons include : the break-up of the joint family ; a spirit of cynicism among the young people who have no present personal recollection of the sufferings of our national leaders but see them in positions of power and prestige ; the low social status of the teacher ; the discrepancy in profession and practice—that "encourages the growth of the 'lie in the soul' in the entire generation" ; and an attitude of mind that material success is the only value to be recognised.

This analysis reads almost like a pathology of our academic life. A body of aimless, listless students provides a body of explosive material that can blow up the very foundations of our social life. "*Inquilab zindabad*" is not an empty slogan : it is charged with the dynamite of frustrated youth. If it has known its power in the days of the National Struggle, it can hardly rest content with a passive role when it finds that the world of its dreams lies shattered in front of it. In victory, it finds defeat. That, perhaps, explains the psychopathology of student unrest—not merely in India but all over the world. The issues, taken in their totality, are indeed too big and too complex to be solved on a single plane. Yet the educationist must contribute his own assessment of the problem and act so far as it lies

within his power. He has to face a tie with the politician. Unfortunately, Kabir's analysis, wide and comprehensive as it is in its sweep, lacks a focus.

We may now turn our attention to the analysis made by the U.G.C. Committee. In contrast with Kabir's, the Committee takes a rather limited view in defining the problem of student indiscipline. By indiscipline the Committee understands "misconduct that involves mass moral turpitude and collective defiance of authority and use of techniques in seeking redress of real or imaginary grievances which are not appropriate for University students to use"*. This definition avoids what the Committee would call "minor transgressions of the code of behaviour" such as individual courtesy to teachers, misbehaviour towards women students and the like, or "boys-will-be-boys" type of mischief or individual delinquency.

Among the pre-disposing influences that lead to student indiscipline are, according to the Committee, national and regional politics in the life of universities and colleges, the influence of what the Committee describes as "contemporary ideas of success on the growing minds of young students"—success that is not based on intellectual or moral attainments,—the rise of student-politicians as well as teacher-politicians, desire for publicity, loss of traditional social values, stress on rights rather than responsibilities, loss of parental authority, deterioration in the economic position of the teacher which has reduced many of them to the position of "hacks", disgruntled and frustrated, with little interest in their pupils' life, and not least, wrong motivations in our universities. Other points made by the U.G.C. Committee are as follows : inadequate loyalties to the ideas of education on the part of the older and younger members of universities ; regimented discipline ; over-crowding of class-rooms with no proportional increase in student amenities, large enrolments creating an atmosphere of mob mentality ; deterioration as a consequence of large enrolments in the teacher-pupil ratios ; unsatis-

* Report on The Problem of Student Indiscipline in Indian Universities (U.G.C., 1959), p. 4.



factory living conditions of students, even in hostels ; no clear sense of purpose and lack of opportunities for entering on a career : prevailing system of examinations ; difficulties arising out of the medium of instruction ; lack of a wide and healthy interest in physical or cultural activities.* There is also the special role of the college or university student unions as a bargaining counter or as a forum for voicing the grievances of the students.⁷ "It has been also found" the Committee observes, "that political parties take an active interest in the student union elections and in many universities and colleges the elections are fought on a party basis as directed by the existing political parties". It also reports that some "so-called student leaders" are paid by the political parties. There are also "professional student leaders" who are often responsible for misguiding the fresh entrants into our universities". Some of these leaders stay in their colleges for more than 4 to 5 years, even 8 or 9 years, in the interest of student-political parties.

It will be seen that though there is a certain over-lapping between Kabir's analysis and that of the University Grants Commission, in regard to the diagnosis of the main causes of, or factors bearing on, student indiscipline, certain special grounds are additionally mentioned in the U.G.C. Report. The Report, we see, takes a more pragmatic view of the aetiology of student indiscipline. The upshot of the whole discussion is once again a clear pointer to the fact that the problem of student indiscipline is a problem of multiple dimensions and, as such, is more a study in social pathology than an academic question though, naturally, it has important academic aspects and implications. A proper and lasting solution would presume a thorough overhaul of our social, economic, political and academic life. This is a tall order and yet it must be done. In fact, our failure to move with the required speed and, shall we add, anticipation, has been responsible for much of the unrest that pervades our society at all levels. Political parties have understandably seized this state of general feeling of unrest (which has not spared the student community)

* On the other hand, the Committee does not think it "desirable" that a disproportionate amount of students' time and energy should be spent on extra-curricular or "festive" activities (see p. 9 of the Report).

⁷ See Section V of this chapter.



for furtherance of their own ends. This unrest, one may say, is today part of a world phenomenon and reflects a desperate attempt on the part of developing nations with scarce resources to assert their right to a civilised existence free from the fear of want. Meanwhile, the probe into the pathological conditions of our existing educational system must continue, and with it the issue of student indiscipline with its wide ramifications, economic, social, political and academic, must be squarely faced, not evaded or by-passed, and tackled with determination tempered by understanding. And this understanding must be a two-way process.

In a sense, no blame could attach to the political parties for their so-called interference with the academic world. It is their duty to give a voice to popular feelings and a sense of direction to the uncertainties of a situation. Democracy is not a mere copy-book of maxims. It is meant to be realised in the lives of individuals as well as of communities. Political parties help the process by bringing about the alignment of inchoate political forces and making them effective. Where the academic world joins issue with the leadership of the major political parties is in the increasing recourse by political parties to what they call *direct* action which seeks to by-pass the duly constituted legislature and to deny the value of the well-recognised democratic processes of reasoned discussion and majority vote. Secondly, the academic world joins issue when a political ideology encourages the students to participate in agitational programmes which sooner or later leads to clashes with the police and ultimately undermine their (students') respect for law and all that it stands for. Thirdly, it also joins issue when the Students' Unions are converted into political forums with the student wings of the different political parties vying with each other to "capture" these bodies for the furtherance of their party interests. Finally, the stock-in-trade of these political infiltrators into the student body is a carefully cultivated habit of defiance of all authority except that of their own party-bosses. These are the influences which today are immensely adding to the difficulties of schools, colleges and universities to give of their best to their misguided students. There are so many other causes, as Kabir has stated, that have contributed to the loss of leadership of our teachers and educators (excepting, of course, the teacher-politicians). There are, without doubt, palpable failures within the academic world itself;



but attempts at rectification or reform are thwarted by the philosophy of violence that more the extremist sections of the students. It is well-known that this section is in a minority ; and it is a puzzle how they manage to hypnotise the large majority of the students, who presumably wish to pursue their studies in a tranquil atmosphere, into absolute inaction, if not passive submission.

IV

In Search for Remedies

Unfortunately, the University Grants Commission has not been able to suggest anything more effective than recommending that admission to colleges and universities should be made "strictly with reference to qualifications and merit" (with some relaxation for students belonging to scheduled castes and from rural areas), increasing the age of entry to 16 or 17, and limiting the roll-strength to 1000, with "appropriate steps" to bring about closer touch between teachers and pupils. Other recommendations include : bringing the salary of college and university teachers up to the level of class I Government Officers, careful selection of teachers, elimination of teachers' constituencies in the legislatures and reducing elections to university bodies and societies to the minimum, selection of University Vice-Chancellors on the basis of their eminence in the academic and educational world, opening of more hostels for students as well as centres for non-resident students, appropriate provisions for bringing in the better elements among the students themselves into the students' unions, and vocational and moral guidance for students. A glance at the proposals made show—I have to say it with great regret—that the Commission has merely crossed the t's dotted the i's of the proposals that have been made from time to time from other platforms. They do not show any significant deviation from the traditional modes of thinking. If we could separate the doves from the hawks, these proposals would have done a lot to put the ship of education on an even keel for the former class of students. But as the epicentre of all the trouble is located far outside of the college campus, these measures will not touch the root

of the problem. The ugly events that happened in the Presidency College, Calcutta, and its attached Hostel, in 1967 show that neither selective admission, nor having students in residence, nor a proper teacher-pupil ratio, with a teaching staff of high academic standing—can be a real solution of the problem, until and unless the *root causes* of such indiscipline are discovered and suitably dealt with.

For instance, when it is stated that most of the indisciplined youth of today have had an unhappy family life or come of disintegrated families, it is possibly not realised that there have been very serious cases of organised indiscipline involving young men belonging to well-to-do families. The violent student demonstrations that took place in Delhi in September, 1966, were not confined to down-and-out slum-dwellers. A socio-economic survey, carried out a few years ago, of the conditions in which the residents of the Gwyer Hall of the Delhi University lived showed that only 3 per cent. of the students spent less than Rs. 125 per month, 28 per cent. spent Rs. 151 to Rs. 175 per month, 29 per cent. spent Rs. 176 or Rs. 200 per month and 18 per cent. over Rs. 200 per month. Professor Nirmalchandra Bhattacharyya, a member of the West Bengal Legislative Council, quoting these figures, concluded that during those disturbances which "sullied the reputation of the University....the economic factors did not play an important part". According to him, "the depressing educational atmosphere and moral nihilism constituted the most potent cause of this distemper". He did not, however, explain how the *modus operandi* of this determined set raised the technique of indiscipline to the point of indecency, equated victory with violence, and denigrated democracy to demagogic; they would prefer passion to persuasion and excitement to education; they functioned, in a sense, outside the pale of all academic efforts for the solution of the problems that face the students of India. It is this determined group of students who today are making a mockery of all efforts to solve these problems on a rational and academic level.

It is interesting to see that Professor Kabir in spite of all his experience and acumen has followed a similar line and sought a solution of the problem of indiscipline in terms of academic values. He suggests : Improve the quality of the recruits to the teaching



profession and the teacher-pupil ratio* ; weed out political parties and intrigues ; appoint Vice-Chancellors on *academic*, not *party*, considerations ; improve salary scales of teachers ; give special recognition to teachers who have the capacity to build up the corporate life of the campus, as well as to those " who have a special flair for teaching ", who are " pure teachers " ; provide facilities for higher study abroad for teachers of colleges and universities ; improve the social status of teachers ; simultaneously adopt suitable measures for the improvement of the conditions of service of elementary and secondary teachers for the same reason. Again, as regards students, Kabir has suggested : Increase the facilities for meritorious students who are economically handicapped ; permit only such pupils as have special aptitude and interest to go to colleges and universities ; improve student amenities both in schools and colleges and introduce self-help programmes. So far as defects in the system of education itself are concerned, Kabir's suggestions include the following : pressure on universities is to be relieved by the diversification of secondary education courses ; there should be provision for physical and moral education of pupils and increase of co-curricular activities ; prevailing modes of class-room teaching should be modified to include activity-based programmes, tutorials, seminars, etc ; the present insistence for the possession of a degree for employment (except at the lowest levels) must go ; students should be given greater opportunities for self-expression, a greater sense of freedom and initiative ; and the establishment of the " House " system and a " Council of Ministers " (which may also constitute a " Juvenile Court of Honour ") are recommended for schools (no specific recommendation is made for Colleges). Finally, Kabir has recommended certain measures to revive a sense of values among the students. This must be preceded by an improvement in the status of teachers. A sense of obligation to society is also to be induced in the pupils. They should understand

* Incidentally, Kabir shows that due to the consequent increase in the number of teachers to be employed, " educated employment will be virtually liquidated ". He calculates that at the elementary level alone a national system of education would require about 2.7 million teachers which would mean additional appointment for 2 million teachers. There would be resultant increase in the number of teachers at the secondary and higher levels. Even if another 400,000 teachers at all levels are employed, educated unemployment would be practically liquidated. See his *Education in New India*, p. 162.

that the cost of maintaining a pupil in school is approximately equal to the *per capita* income of *three* persons in our country and that in College it is equal to the *per capita* income of *four to five* persons.* Students should also be encouraged to associate with various types of developmental projects. Various lines of community service may also be developed with the active participation of students. Religion, not entangled in dogma or rituals, can create a spirit of idealism among the youth. They should also be taught about the basic unity of human ideals, and helped to get a better perspective of the world ; and finally, the inevitability of change should be recognised.

It is easy to see that the recommendations that Professor Kabir has made are right and sensible in regard to specific aspects of student indiscipline ; yet they suffer from the same fundamental defects as those of the University Grants Commission. Lest I should be misunderstood, I feel I should explain more fully why I have taken the view that these recommendations miss their mark.

Every one who knows anything about the present sorry state of education in India will agree that both the University Grants Commission and Professor Kabir have pin-pointed some of the extreme inadequacies and shortcomings of the present system of education in India, in particular the shabby treatment that has been the long-endured lot of our teachers, even to the extent of being denied a minimum living wage. Nor have we done our duty, as we should have, to our students. If a sound system of education is the point at issue, it would be difficult to think out a better set of proposals in the national perspective and in the context of correct educational values, than those presented by these authorities. Unfortunately—and this is the point of my criticism—these proposals divert our attention from the hard *political* core of the problem of student indiscipline to the issues that are concerned with the removal of certain deficiencies of the educational system but which affect only indirectly the problem of student indiscipline. It is well-known that in all acts of indiscipline, it is always the few that start the ball rolling while others toe the line ; also that

* Kabir, *op. cit.*, p. 181.



those who take a direct part in such activities are generally a minority of the students of the institution concerned but a determined minority with a clear *political* objective in view. The existing deficiencies about which there are no two opinions except, perhaps, in the degree of emphasis are, with this minority, just a cover that lend plausibility to their more sinister designs. If those who view these activities from the side-lines as it were, or stay away from the scene, were the only ones to be considered, that is, those who do not really subscribe to the mood of violence, the recommendations discussed above could have helped towards a solution of the problem of student unrest in so far as their grievances are real and genuine. But it is the activists who really matter—even though they constitute a minority—and who hold the stage and these people are not really interested in a purely academic solution of the crisis they have precipitated. No doubt, as already stated, an ostensible list of what would appear to be genuine grievances is often put forward as the reason of their action ; but an impartial study of their *mode* and *methods* of action, their attitude of defiance, tell-tale slogans, their indecent and violent behaviour and, above all, their political affiliations, would show that the motivation of this kind of mob action is far from academic. The problem, therefore, is to make this group *ineffective*, and to isolate it from the general mass of students who do not want really to see their studies interrupted in this fashion but who are under a sort of temporary hypnosis which saps their will to dissent, not to speak of active resistance. In some cases, a climate of mass hysteria is deliberately and carefully induced which leads to massive indiscipline at the slightest indiscretion or tactlessness of the authorities. It is needless to add that that exactly is one of the objects behind such ugly demonstrations, to provoke the authorities to such indiscretion so that ultimately the demonstrators might pose as martyrs to a cause, and give out a stirring call for 'student unity' against the 'reactionary' authorities ! .

My point is that well-meaning efforts to improve the status and emoluments of teachers, or to provide increased amenities for the students, will not influence the conduct or behaviour-patterns of this thoroughly misguided section of students. They are, by and large, politically indoctrinated, brain-washed students, directed by unseen hands which operate in secret. It is even as likely as not that



their loyalties lie outside their own institutions. They require a new technique of treatment. This we shall presently discuss.

Meanwhile, there is one point that does not seem to have received adequate attention at the hands of the reformist group. It is the need of enlisting the support of parents in order to make education safe for their wards. It is well-known that family influence has a chance to shape the character of children more than any other kind of influence. Kabir has referred to the disappearance of the joint family system. He should have rather referred to the disintegration of the family system itself. Part of this disintegration is no doubt due to economic forces. When both the parents have to go out to work and children are left to line up in long queues for obtaining even the barest necessities of life—sometimes the children are left to nobody's care during the absence of the parents—one cannot expect that the family would have the time or the opportunity to exercise the same kind of authority over the children or the adolescents as it used to do when the struggle for existence had not reached the acuteness of its present stage. What can the educational system do to ease the situation ? The solution lies over a very wide range of State action. The concept of the Welfare State has been devised precisely to undertake this responsible task. We cannot say that the Indian Government has succeeded in projecting a heart-warming picture of itself in the public mind in this regard, mainly because its own resources are for too limited. What, however, is more to the point is the fact that, apart from its obvious present limitations, the family also has abdicated its essential function of ensuring at least a minimum of affectionate care, intelligently exercised, for its children. In many cases, the misplaced indulgence which some of the guardians bestow on their children, the bad examples which they themselves, in common with other elders, set before their impressionable wards, the lack of a spirit of co-operation with the authorities of schools and colleges, their inability to take a long-term view of the interests of their wards—all these show that the problem of student indiscipline is not wholly an excrescence of academic life but lie deeply imbedded in the facts and circumstances that surround the boys (and girls too) in their early childhood and adolescence, in their home life as well as in their immediate local environment. " If lack of social concern has become a feature of the general community,"



says B. P. Gajendragadkar, " how can we blame the students for not being inspired by high ideals ? It is the vice in the climate itself and the true and enduring remedy to the recent explosion of student indiscipline lies in putting an end to this climate." To start with, if the family can re-establish its authority over its younger members during the time when they are likely to be responsive to such authority, the path towards eventual delinquency will be blocked before it turns still more slippery.

To bring about a situation like this, a standing machinery for teacher-parent consultations will, no doubt, be very helpful. Most schools usually organise a Parents' (or Mothers') Day once a year. This is a very good idea which may be introduced also in institutions of undergraduate teaching. What is required further to meet the situation is that there should be continuous communication between the parents or other guardians on the one hand and the school or college authorities on the other. The existence of such a system of communication would be useful during periods of crisis ; it might be more useful to prevent such crisis. Certainly there are students who are defiant of the authority of their parents and guardians ; but their number presumably is not beyond control. At any rate, the home is not the place for mass action, unlike a school or college, and parental authority, firmly and intelligently exercised, and in good time, can make it extremely hazardous as well as unprofitable for the young recalcitrant to have his own way. Information communicated to the parent in good time by the head of the institution at the first sign of intransigence of his ward may exercise a salutary and timely check on such tendencies. To that extent, the subversive elements among the student community will have to reckon with a very powerful force working in the opposite direction.

Enforcement of discipline, with or without the help of parents, is at best a negative way of dealing with a disease that has become almost endemic. A more positive way has to be found, if possible, to counter the efforts of those "leaders" who provide the inspiration for indiscipline. It is here that extra-curricular and co-curricular activities within the College campus can help. The following forms of campus activities may, in particular, be considered.

- (i) Dramatics ; film-shows (both feature films and documentary films) ; musical evenings ; inter-class debates or speech competitions on a more frequent basis ; student-teacher get-togethers. (These may be so arranged that there is at least one mid-week and one week-end programme. The student teacher get-together may be an end-of-the-term function). Needless to add, there should an entertainment fund out of which the expenses incurred on these functions may be met.
- (ii) Better provision of indoor-sports and games. Facilities at present available for such games may be expanded to include teacher-student participation in special contests. Games might include card parties, quiz contests, games of skill etc.
- (iii) Facilities for joining language classes.
- (iv) For boys aspiring after leadership, or with the gift of the gab, mock-parliaments may be held with, preferably, a member of India's Parliament or the State legislature presiding over the function, to be concluded, say, with an oration from the M.P., or the M.L.A. This will, incidentally be a useful association of an academic institution with public life.

One can, of course, add to this list. The indoor programmes can be supplemented by off-campus activities. Students may be prepared for, and be actively encouraged to participate in, inter-collegiate sports and athletics, musical sessions (especially for girls) or other forms of healthy outdoor competitions. Organisations like the N.C.C., Boy Scouts, Girl-Guides, and other social service organisations need to be actively supported by both the guardians and the authorities of educational institutions. Organisation of voluntary services in which students can participate can be offered in several sectors of public involvement. Clubs of young people, organised on a locality-basis, with the active support and co-operation of their guardians, teachers and other leading members of the local community may, on a selective basis, qualify for the



generous patronage of the State, civic authorities as well as the public. Certain other forms of off-the-campus activities may include :

- (i) Social service programmes such as adult literacy campaigns, participation in community-development programmes, organisation of "charity-shows" or fund-raising campaigns for worthy causes and the like.
- (ii) A well-planned programme of educational excursions, at least once in each term, subject-wise, for which all expenses are to be met by the authorities. There may also be general excursions, on a contributory basis. The latter may include picnics, conducted tours, visits to factories and farms, places of historical or archaeological interest, newspaper offices etc., as well as inter-disciplinary field-work or investigations.
- (iii) Development of interests in outdoor activities e.g. hiking, mountaineering, shikar, swimming and rowing, gardening, photography and the like, or even suitable spare time jobs.

These off-campus activities or programmes would not only supplement the academic programmes but provide a more attractive outlet for the surplus energies of young people which otherwise might seek undesirable channels of expression. They would also, between them, spare little time for prolonged acts of indiscipline or subversive movements by offering counter-attractions of genuine student interest. Close contact between the faculty and the student community, both at the individual and the collective level, would break the smoke-screen of anonymity behind which the mischief-makers usually operate.

I must repeat, however, that like most of the recommendations made by the University Grants Commission or other experts, many of the suggestions listed above would not be sufficient to deter the extremists from pursuing their own paths, that is, unless proper attention is at the same time given to the mischief-makers, actual or potential, who usually lead or are at the back of every major disturbance in academic institutions. An attempt can be made to solve this problem in either of two ways : by identifying and isolating this group from the general body of students, or by providing a legitimate outlet for the craze for leadership which they possess. What is proposed is rather a combination of both.

This could be done by providing a satisfying life for the major section of the students by organizing attractive curricular or co-curricular programmes that would go a long way to keep them away from mischief; and the other is to meet the minority on its own terms. The governing fact is that this small group of student leaders are really engaged in a game of power-politics. Would it be possible for the educational system to provide this group with opportunities for the actual exercise of power within the College campus and to take care that the exercise of such power is accompanied by responsibility?

This raises the question of the ultimate character of the "Students' Unions" in colleges and universities. It is these Unions that discover the leadership of the student community. These leaders, according to present practice, are, more often than not, the nominees of the respective student-wings of the political parties. Some of them have cultivated the technique of public speaking, and they know all the *cliches* that are certain to attract the imagination of those gullible students who are still intellectually too immature to understand the deeper implications of the manoeuvres of their leader-friends. These latter, further, are adepts in creating "situations," the first step of which is to prepare a "charter" of (mostly impossible) demands which have a high propaganda value. They take the first opportunity to show that they are not subservient to the authorities by proposing open defiance of all authority, and by deliberately insulting and threatening the head of the institution and other staff with dire consequences, and saddling them in advance with the responsibility for the same, if they have the temerity to point out the unreasonable nature of the demands or to resist them, not to speak of taking disciplinary action against the culprits. And in forcing the situation, these leaders are careful enough to commit the Students' Union (which is already packed with their supporters elected openly or clandestinely with party support) to the consequences that would inevitably follow. If the head of the institution yields—after all, he is more likely than not an elderly man suffering from frayed nerves or blood pressure—it makes heroes of the leaders and the Students' Union is speedily resolved into an *imperium in imperio* with whom the authorities of the institution concerned must henceforth deal on nearly equal terms. The Union becomes the focal point of student indisci-



pline. The power-crazy minority is now in occupation of a bastion of power.

How to deal with this situation, to rescue the general body of students from the hypnotic siren-call of this coterie and to divert their activities once again along legitimate channels?

Abolish the students' unions? Or, give more power to them, but power with responsibility? What does the latter step exactly mean in concrete, or institutional, terms?

V

Abolish Students' Unions?

A distinguished Vice-Chancellor of an Indian University a few years ago actually recommended the dissolution of Students' Unions in all colleges and universities. This extreme and drastic proposal was made in the context of the prevailing indiscipline of students culminating in violent conduct will over India. Since then the state of things has gone from bad to worse and there is as yet no sign of improvement in the near or foreseeable future. The Vice-Chancellor was probably trying to write an epilogue to a distressing chapter of student unrest throughout India. If the students' unions were dissolved, he might have thought, the leadership would lose their perch and so lose their effectiveness.

That there is some justification for this extreme view is not difficult to understand. Sometimes a major surgical operation is necessary to save a gangrenous patient. If in maintaining a students' union in a college or university at all costs, the academic life of the institution is in danger of being destroyed and with it the intellectual and cultural foundations of the nation, educational authorities must naturally exercise their pre-emptive right of choice instead of sacrificing the future for the sake of an expediency. So better abolish the Unions rather than be compelled to abolish the Colleges. In the way in which the problem is put, it would be difficult not to sympathise with those who prescribe such a desperate treatment.

There would certainly be some advantages if the proposed solution—the abolition of the students' unions—is accepted. These unions

have become, by and large, hot-beds of subsersive politics. All plans of organised indiscipline are hatched in the inner conclaves of the Unions. Students are then asked to support and rally round their Union in the name of "student unity". What the leaders say is sacrosanct as the "decision" of the Union. The head of the institution is helpless. So is the professor-in-charge of Union activities when the decision of the Union is carried, possibly *nem con*, or at any rate with the support of a large majority of the student members. To reason with them at that stage is useless, for the die is already cast. If the head of the institution is not prepared to surrender, he is in for great trouble. So he might retaliate by suggesting : better dissolve the Union itself and to avoid the inevitable cataclysm, close the college. Another supposed advantage of this course would be that with the closure of the college, the mischief-makers would be dispersed and lose their perch in the college itself. They would have to go to the streets to devise other, perhaps more diabolical, methods of constraint and coercion ; and that might ultimately give the community an opportunity to exert itself. A third advantage would be the priceless one of impressing on the students the fact that violence and coercion would not pay, now and in future ; also that if interruption to studies due to the closure of the college is prolonged for an indefinite period of time, and students would gradually realise that their chances of passing the college or university examinations are receding, the saner sections in the Union would ultimately be compelled to assert themselves and make it unpleasant for their so-called leaders to continue their fight any further. When the goal is clear, it would be a very welcome change in the prevailing pattern of student behaviour.

Unfortunately for themselves, and more so for the students, College Principals (with rare exceptions) have been unable to force the issue by a direct offensive, such as mentioned above, against the so-called student leaders.¹⁰ Some of them try to evade the issue

¹⁰ Actually many of these *so-called* student leaders belong to the "once-upon-a-time" category, that is, they have long ceased to be students. Some of them, however, secure formal admission to a College and manage to stay for 4, 5 or 6 years just to organise the Union elections on behalf of their party. Some of them are actually card-holders in their respective party organisations. Needless to add, they have no interest in passing the examinations or in the smooth working of the institution to which they belong.



simply by suspending the classes whenever the situation reaches the critical point, as for instance, when the safety, security and interests of the law-abiding students are in danger or college property is threatened. Still others capitulate to avoid such a situation at all developing. As wise, experienced men, they are certainly aware that in either case, the solution is a palliative ; it merely puts a hyphen between one crisis and another.

Actually, even the abolition of the students' unions appears to be, on fuller consideration, an unsatisfactory solution. A students' union performs certain important functions as part of the college life of the undergraduate. It has an intrinsic educational value and is an integral part of academic life. It is the misuse of the organisation for other than academic purposes that is the real issue. The proposal for the abolition of the students' union is a counsel of despair ; it follows from the failure to prevent the misuse. If the attitude of the student leaders is that rules are meant to be violated, that academic discipline is an outmoded—a bourgeois—concept, that the students' union is a revolutionary body, that subversion is the real way of progress, the College Principal would be less than a human being if he thinks, in exasperation, that he has had enough of student-unionism and would rather welcome a breathing time to set his house—the college—in order. But this attitude would, at best, provide a temporary relief, while, as its worst, it would be more likely than not to lead to a more acute and widespread agitation to be directed against the Principal himself. If the Principal has the guts to last out this persecution, he would certainly have served a cause. But if he failed to stand the strain, and ultimately submitted, his failure would be worse than a defeat. I have personally no doubt that if all the heads of institutions united in their resolve not to yield to threats or even to actual violent conduct of the students, half the battle against indiscipline would have been won. The way would then be left open for proper conciliation on the basis of genuine grievances.

The fact cannot be denied that there *are* genuine grievances that may rightly agitate the students. It is, of course, true that the redress of some of these grievances is beyond the capacity of individual institutions. The University or the Government would be more appropriate bodies to solve many of these problems and the Principals

would be justified in exercising their influence over them. But the responsibility must be properly placed. For instance, if questions set at a University examination are stiff, or out-of-syllabus, or lengthy, why should the college be made the object of their fury merely because it happens to have been the examination centre for that particular subject, and the building and furniture, even laboratories with costly apparatus damaged ? The point, however, is that there are some genuine grievances which it is within the competence of the authorities concerned to solve but which somehow are shelved, and the discontent of the students accumulates until it bursts the bounds of reason. If the fight against indiscipline is to be waged with a clean conscience, such negligence on the part of the authorities should immediately give way to a readiness to listen to the students' complaints and take proper steps, after reasonably prompt investigation, for meeting their legitimate requirements. To abolish the students' unions because of the failure or incompetence of the authorities themselves would be, in such circumstances, a remedy worse than the disease.

VI

"Student Government"

The conclusion of the preceding section is that while the students' union may stay, there needs be some re-thinking on its form and functions. The re-thinking is necessary for two reasons.

In the first place, it must be recognised that the general body of students of today differ from their confrères of the past. They are politically more mature. Their association with and understanding of the material aspects of life and living, and the problems that they present, are more direct and intimate than of their predecessors who had lived more or less a sheltered life. Freedom has brought them face to face with the realities of life. It has given them a taste of power and a sense, however imperfect, of their rights and claims. Their co-operation is eagerly sought for by political parties. They themselves look forward to sharing political power with those who are in authority and meanwhile a section of



them grows impatient with the slow motion of the wheels of change. The emergence of the Afro-Asian Powers, the important role that South-East Asia is playing in world politics, the rise of new China under the leadership of Mao tse Tung—all these have contributed to a new revolutionary outlook among the present generation of youth whose inclinations and aspiration for the establishment of new values can hardly be checked by old-world ideas of discipline suitable to an age when the young could be successfully directed to accept the authority of their elders without question. If the newly acquired freedom is to have any meaning for the millions that inhabit India, it must engender a questioning spirit, a protestant attitude, a refusal to take things on trust, in the minds of India's students who, as in every other country, regard themselves as the trustees of their own future.

The second reason why a new thinking is necessary is that the politically conscious section of the new breed of students have realised the effectiveness, in a democracy, of collective power, of sheer force of numbers, in every sphere of national activity. Why should the group that control the educational system, it is argued, enjoy any special immunity? It is, on the other hand, regarded as the students' own sphere. The next step of a power-crazy generation of young hotheads is to test their strength first in what may be regarded as their domestic front. Since the governance of educational affairs still rests on those whom they consider to be ante-dated University Dons, they can test their militant leadership by the degree to which they can reduce the Principal, the University Court (or Syndicate) or the Senate to a position of impotence by creating chaos and making orderly life within and about the college campus quite impossible—the undeclared creed of a certain brand of student politics. The broken window panes, the unhinged doors, the damaged furniture, the twisted electric fans, the missing tube-lights, the smashed test-tubes, or other more valuable apparatus in the laboratory—well, these remain as the scars of "victory" in the fight for the assertion of the power of student-leaders.

Here there is a cause for re-thinking. What can be done short of the dubious remedy of abolishing all student unions? Here is an alternative, already tried in certain foreign universities to be considered :

The alternative is to allow the students opportunity for a more meaningful participation in the management of their own affairs. Authority will have to recognise the new status of the student community and the change in the character of student leadership. If it is realised that heavens will not fall if the student leaders are given a share in the internal government of a college in its day-to-day affairs, the nihilism of today may give way to positive faculty-student co-operation in order to make the life of the student on the campus more purposeful and creative. It must not do to forget that power is dangerous without responsibility, and that responsibility would make recourse to acts of indiscipline a challenge to the student community itself. The problem is the demarcation of both power and responsibility among the students, the faculty members and the authorities. There are various ways in which the new relationship can be given institutional expression. The United States of America has made many experiments in this field to which a brief reference will now be made.

In many of the American Universities, students' unions are organised in the form of "Student Governments" equipped with a legislative body, an executive and a judiciary. In the Missouri University, for instance, each student in the University is enrolled as a member of the "Student Government Association" which gives all students a voice in University affairs and offers them the opportunity to fulfil their responsibilities to the student community through participation in a system of student self-government.¹¹ The extra-curricular activities of the Student Government Association are designed to be in "direct support of the academic programme of the University". It is, however, clearly laid down that all organisations and activities on the campus are under the supervision of a Committee on Student Affairs, except those that are under the Decree of Divisions.

In the State University of Iowa, which has, perhaps, the most elaborate form of student government, the constitution of the Students'

¹¹ This Association is to be distinguished from the Memorial Students' Union which organizes the recreational programmes like dances, parties, table tennis, chess, cards and other games as well as student-faculty coffee hours, a film classics series, a forum featuring student and faculty speakers, etc.

Council consists of eight Articles divided into 31 sections. Article II states that the purpose of the Students' Council "shall be to improve the status of student life on the campus and to present student attitudes on matters of student affairs affecting students in their role as students which are now not within the jurisdiction of other properly constituted groups". The residual character of the Council's jurisdiction is to be noted. The elected officers of the Student Body are the President and the Vice-President who must have a 2.25 grade-point average if under-graduate, or if in a Graduate College, shall be certified by the Dean to be in "good academic standing."¹² Appointed officials are the Executive Secretary, the Director of the Budget and Treasury and the Director of Public Relations and Personnel. The elected and the appointed officials constitute the Executive Branch of the "Student Body". The Legislative Branch is indirectly elected by the constituent associations and is presided over by the Vice-President of the Student Body. The Judicial Branch consists of the "Student Council Court" consisting of 5 members nominated by specified student organizations. Its jurisdiction extends over all cases involving violation of election rules or of traffic regulations. Again, the idea of student government, includes (1) a Code of Student Life, (2) decentralisation of student bodies and their functions and (3) greater responsibility for these bodies. The focal point of all these activities is the "Office of Student Affairs", which is an administrative division of the College and to which the Principal of the College delegates most of the administrative powers including powers of financial control which he at present exercises in relation to the students' activities in general and those of the Students' Union in particular. This office is presided over by the Dean of the Students or by the Student Counsellor.

The "Code of Student Life," a printed copy of which is handed over to each student on his admission to the College, is a code of student behaviour. Every student so admitted is expected to abide by this Code.

¹² In Missouri also, the University Bulletin states that to be eligible for participation in all activity the student must be doing "satisfactory academic work".



The Introduction to the *Code* which is addressed to the student states, *inter alia*,

"In the non-academic phase of your career at University, the *Code of Student Life* is your guide book. This Code outlines briefly what is expected of you while you are enrolled at this institution. Experience has shown that it is necessary in any society to set up some expected criteria of behaviour for the members of that society...."

The standard of conduct prescribed for persons attending the University is "the practice and usage of good society". "The University expects every student," the Code states, "to conduct himself at all times and on every occasion in accordance with good taste and to observe the regulations of the University and the laws of the City, State and national government that apply to matters of conduct". (Chapter I).

In the Swarthmore College, Pennsylvania, the College Bulletin refers to "Student Conduct" in the following terms : "the association of men and women in academic work and social life is to be governed by good taste and accepted practice rather than by elaborate rules." In the Haverford College, in the same State, there is the "Honour System". This College, which is a Quaker institution, lays great stress, in the words of its bulletin, on "the importance of personal ideals and moral values". The Honour system works on the principle of individual as well as collective responsibility of the students for student behaviour. Every Haverford student has to declare : "I hereby accept the Haverford College Honour System, realising that it is my responsibility to safeguard, uphold, and preserve each part of the Honour System and the attitude of personal and collective honour upon which it is based." Specially, each student who enters Haverford pledges himself to uphold three responsibilities of the Honour System. (1) to govern his own conduct according to the principles which have been adopted by the Students' Association ; (2) in case of breach of the Honour system to report himself to the Students' Council ; and (3) if he became aware of a violation by another student, to ask the offender to fulfil his pledge by reporting himself. If the offender refuses, the student is pledged to report the matter to the Students' Council. It is interesting to



observe that the Haverford students themselves decide upon the standards and regulations which are needed in the College.¹³

If it is agreed to give greater responsibilities to the students to manage their own affairs, it is necessary, as a safeguard against too much concentration of power, to distribute these responsibilities among a number of student organisations, each functioning within a limited and specified field of activity with suitable faculty guidance. For co-ordinating their activities there may be a central office or organisation on the American model, based on teacher-student participation. The Central Office may be on the lines of the Office on Student Affairs or the Committee on Student Life and Interests as in some of the American Universities.

These are some of the "models" which Indian authorities might consider in their application to India. On a closer consideration it seems that an adaptation of the American model may be considered as a useful innovation, having regard to the way in which most of the students unions (especially in the affiliated colleges) are at present functioning in India. The idea of an intermediate body standing between the College or University authority and the general student-body as a sort of cushion to soften the chances of conflict appears to be a good one. Such a body, standing between the Principal and the Union Council, would, as adviser, moderator and co-ordinator, be of great help in checking firebrand leadership on the one hand, and offering genuine disinterested help, guidance, and advice to the Council as well as to the general students, on the other. Moreover, it is clear that the Union Councils as at present constituted, for instance in West Bengal, are not properly qualified or competent to control such activities as sports and games, editing and publication of the magazine, organising seminars, reading and discussion groups, dramatics etc. These activities, to be effectively organised, must be the concern of *competent* and *interested* groups who should have a more or less free hand in their activity programmes. Union activities as such need only

¹³ It may be mentioned in this connection that the Mudaliar Commission suggested the introduction as well as enforcement of a "Code of Conduct" at the school stage. (See chapter 8 of the Report).



cover the interests of the general body of the students as a whole. Co-ordination of the Union activities as well as those of the specialised autonomous bodies might be the special task of a body like the Central Office or Committee on Student Affairs placed under a Dean of Students. It may be desirable to set up two more special bodies or committees working under the guidance of the Central Office. These are (a) a Committee on Student Residence and (b) a Student Committee on Discipline working on the Haverford model.

Much would depend on the Central Office or Committee. This Office would exercise administrative control over student affairs and act as a co-ordinating agency or a focal centre for all student activities. Its advice would be freely available to students in all matters of extra-curricular interest. It would consist of teachers as well as student representatives. The student members would include the Secretaries of the different sections of student activities. Every student organization, including the Union Council, would be required to submit to this office a list of its office-bearers, the name of the Professor-in-charge, and an annual report of its activities. The Office might, in exceptional cases, withdraw recognition from any student organisation or set forth standards which must be maintained in order to enjoy continued recognition. It might also maintain an Information Desk.

The Student Organisations Fund, in the State University of Iowa, requires the following transactions to be handled through the Fund : (i) deposit of all monies ; (ii) payment of all bills by vouchers ; (iii) contracts for bands or materials ; (iv) ordering tickets needed for events sponsored by an organization ; and (v) preparation of budgets for all parties. The Fund is in charge of a Treasurer (who should preferably be a member of the staff) and would be subject to regular audit. The University of Wisconsin has a somewhat different system. There is a "Committee on Student Life and Interests" which approves the Budget while there is a Student Financial Adviser who helps in the preparation of the budget. Ticket sales must also be conducted through the Student Financial Adviser. His office acts as a trustee for all funds invested by student organisations. So far as games and athletics are concerned the system followed in the Massachusetts Institute of Technology



(M.I.T.) may also be considered. The actual charge is given to the "Student Athletic Association" and its Executive Committee which meets weekly to determine all policies having to do with the organisation of the inter-collegiate and intramural programmes. To qualify for eventual membership in the Athletic Association, a freshman may work up through team participation either as a player or as a manager. The Association has its separate fund for financing sports. It will be seen that when the functions are decentralised and separate co-ordinating bodies (with staff and student co-operation) are established, the Students' Union is left to its proper role as a general body of the students to look after the general welfare and interests of the students. Many universities exclude the "freshmen" from membership of its Council or Board while most insist on a minimum scholastic qualification for the members.

There are one or two points emerging from the foregoing discussion which call for serious and immediate consideration. One is the necessity of associating students with the administration of under-graduate colleges as well as universities and of providing for greater contacts between the students and faculty members in the management of student affairs. At the same time, a greater measure of autonomy than is now available should be conceded to the specialised student bodies which at present act as sub-agents of the students' unions. A decentralisation of functions should now be the aim, the Union being itself left with general supervisory and co-ordinating functions. The question of prescribing a minimum qualification—a minimum level of scholastic performance, that is—for the members of the Union as well as qualifications appropriate for membership of the specialised bodies is also to be considered. In India, the colleges would do well to accept Humayun Kabir's suggestion that "there should be for all aspirants for office some insistence on the quality of leadership in some field" and his view that "if it is laid down that no one can be a member of the executive of a University Union or Society unless he is first rate either in studies or in games or in some field of cultural activity like literature, music, dance, drama, debate or painting, we could build up a tradition where the present domination of mediocrity in



many aspects of University life would cease."¹⁴ It is a strange phenomenon in most of our colleges, that the positions of leadership in the Union are too often held by students who are academically misfits or of very poor quality. One reason for this is that the general scholastic standards of private colleges are rather low and the few who are of a better-than-average standard generally keep off Union politics. Whatever the reasons, unless the students' unions are freed of the virus of party politics it is immaterial, generally speaking, whether *A* or *B* is in the Union Council. Party politics ultimately resolves itself into a game of power. If the Union is so organised that it offers scope for the exercise of power (instead of one that would merely go on presenting "demands") with the attendant responsibility, the character of leadership is certain to change. Not only the policy-framing general body of students, but also its subsidiaries organised more or less in the shape of autonomous decentralised groups should share in the total exercise of such power and responsibility. Under these circumstances, political groups that prefer to operate behind an *alibi* will find it difficult to convince the general body of students about the *bona fides* of their operational tactics, far less about the necessity of their infiltration techniques.

What is more in doubt is the possible reaction of the academic authorities to these suggestions. It is not always wise to build on hopes. All that is required is that the implications of the transference of some of the powers at present reserved to the authorities to student bodies should be fully studied. The suggestion made has the support of experience—the experience of a large, complex democracy—behind it, though the recent experiences of some of the Universities in America as well as in other parts of the world provide an uncomfortable question mark to the general trend of this experience. Also, it is difficult to believe that matters affecting the academic world in so far as student indiscipline is concerned could be worse. It is better to fail in an attempt than not to make any attempt at all; but there is no reason to suppose that the attempt would fail.

¹⁴ Convocation Address, Calcutta University, 1960.



CHAPTER XXIV

EDUCATION AND POLITICS

I

The Angry Young Men

In an under-developed country where so much depends on State initiative and support, it is to some extent unavoidable that education would be subject to political influence. What is not so obvious is the kind of politics that is tightening its stranglehold on the student bodies of our universities, colleges and even of schools. There is something fundamentally wrong with either our educational system or with our politics that makes it so easy for our students to get mixed up in the wrong kind of politics, the brand of politics that thrives on a programme of strikes, slogan-shouting, general indiscipline, intolerance, defiance of law and authority, subversion, even to the extent of damaging lives and property. This mix-up of our students with what is somewhat euphemistically described as "demonstration" is a phenomenon that is not peculiar to India alone but has had its counterparts in almost all the newly liberated countries of the world. The dawn of independence found a release for all kinds of pent-up energy in our people, particularly our young people, which curiously found expression in a general defiance of authority, in intolerance, and in a general attitude of aversion to solid, constructive work that usually earns no newspaper headlines. The angry young men were now angry for a different reason for most of them were facing acute frustration in their personal lives. The promise of freedom—apart from the negative one of deliverance from the yoke of foreign rule—had been belied, and grievances were piling up. Already conditioned to a non-conformist attitude, our young men sought for a political solution of their grievances, real or fancied, for the freedom that came after long years of emasculation that had almost crippled a proud and sensitive nation was not the freedom of their youthful dreams, the freedom for which their comrades were



supposed to have laid down their precious young lives. An under-developed economy takes time to flow with milk and honey. It is this fact which produced the angry young men and women of to-day, with a passionate search for scapegoats. Thus they had to align themselves with party organisations that professed to provide them with an outlet for repressed desires, with an unmonitored ego complex. In this way they tried, and still try, to create a microcosm of their own fancy which, in their own sense of self-righteousness, they believe to be the only world to which they can render allegiance.

In all this, youth movements in the newly liberated countries, including that in India, exhibit, more or less, a similar pattern. To this extent, perhaps, we can find some sort of excuse for much of the pattern of behaviour which we are prone to condemn. We would tell our students to avoid political involvement as, indeed, we should do, and be free to pursue their immediate academic interests. But if they do not wish to listen to us, we must try to appreciate and evaluate the reasons for their line of thinking ; and though there is a basic similarity in the patterns of student behaviour in all countries which have been subject to the strains and stresses created by national upheavals, there are important reasons why student behaviour in India should have taken a different line.

For one thing, India has firmly made her choice in favour of parliamentary democracy and made necessary arrangements for a government of the people's choice based on universal adult franchise. What, in these circumstances, could be the rationale of resistance to, or defiance of, authority by any group of malcontents except creating conditions that would enable some people to fish in troubled waters ? For if any change is genuinely desired, the democratic form of government itself provides for a mechanism of peaceful change towards the desired goal. Secondly, unlike most of the newly liberated countries of the world, India inherited from the British rulers a loyal and efficient civil service which had been trained to keep aloof from all local political involvements, particularly of a partisan character and a scrupulously clean, honest and impartial—even we may say—almost incorruptible, judiciary. People should have felt assured that they would get fair treatment and even-handed justice from their officers and the judges so that there should be no need for anybody to take the law in his own hands. The existence, at the time of the crisis



of the transfer of power, of a strong talented national leadership, tested times without number on the anvil of suffering and sacrifice, rarely equalled in the annals of any other nation, had solved the problem of succession to the outgoing regime in a manner which no one had any call to question. Last but not least, the peoples of India had developed a political maturity as the result of their long connection with the liberal traditions of the British constitutional system—with its almost scriptural devotion to the concepts of the Rule of Law and the supremacy of Parliament—which made a smooth and orderly change-over possible over this subcontinent and confounded all the Cassandras, indigenous and foreign, who had probably been waiting in the wings to see an outbreak of violence and anarchy on an unprecedented scale. On top of all this, India's philosophy of peace and non-violence and her political creed of non-involvement were also clearly unfavourable to the adoption of violent methods of settling differences of opinion or of disputes, particularly when constitutional remedies were freely available to all the citizens irrespective of their political affiliations.

And yet, we find, particularly in recent years, the play of ugly forces of indiscipline, of defiance of authority, of subversion and reaction, in almost every field of national activity, regardless of the fact that such actions are likely to block our plans of economic development and progress as well as of national defence. The manifestation of these forces of disruption in the field of education is particularly distressing. Since every effect has its cause, it is necessary for us to identify the cause before we can evaluate the course of action to be taken.

II

The Politics of Power

Is there a link-up, somehow, somewhere, of certain more or less identifiable quarters with the rebellious group of our angry young generation and their leaders? We have foreign Powers interested in weakening our economy and undermining our political faith. It may take the form of armed infiltration to explore the possibility of inciting a civil insurrection, as in Kashmir or Assam, with the active support



of quislings or other disgruntled elements ; or indirectly it may just aim at keeping alive the communal or sectarian forces in the country and weakening the morale of the nationalist forces. It may also take the form of an ideological conflict. Our young people are understandably attracted by the tenets of Marxism-Leninism which combine a powerful theoretical dialectic with a programme of action couched in exciting phrases. With painstaking efforts and fanatical zeal, these missionaries of a new gospel have found in India's policy of non-alignment on the one hand and a secular a-moral educational system on the other a handy base for their uninhibited operations. India, with her traditional hospitality for new ideas, and her spirit of tolerance, has provided a very convenient asylum for systems of thought even when they are fundamentally alien to our culture and hostile to our faith. The rise of numerous splinter groups trying to identify themselves with "progressivism" has caught in their organisational net large numbers of impressionable young men and women who have been led to believe that the last word in "progressive" thought rests with Marx and his successors. They are, however, all patriots in a cause for they all hold strongly onto the belief that they will be serving their country better by disowning the creed of their forbears if and when a critical choice has to be made, and extending their support to a creed of uncompromising struggle which promises them, at no distant date, the *El Dorado* of their choice. The actual method may be pragmatic, suitable, in the particular context of circumstances, to the realisation of the ultimate goal. It may be a bloody *coup* or a revolution here, swift and decisive ; or, it may be one of attrition of the national will elsewhere, prolonged and steady.

If it were merely the attraction of a rival creed, or of the promise of a better way of life, leftism would not have made such headway, had not a section of the ruling class in India helped the process by developing a politics of "self-before-service" in almost every field of national endeavour. Gandhiji, we recall, had recommended the dissolution of the Indian National Congress after the attainment of independence by India. He, perhaps, foresaw, with the vision of a seer, the straits to which some of the neo-bureaucrats of the Congress would be reduced in the inevitable intoxication of power. It was the Congress which took over power from the British



in New Delhi. At that time, it was the Congress of the Indian Nation. It was the Congress—the Indian National Congress—which wrote—“We, the people of India”—in the Constitution in a spirit of true dedication. But it did not disband itself after the fulfilment of its historic mission. It stayed on—as the *Congress Party*—to govern the country and rule over her teeming millions. No doubt, thanks to the people’s affection for the Congress that had unfurled the banner of Freedom, it was, as it still is, the largest single party in the country. But it no longer rules by the *consensus* of the people. It has to count the votes. It has to pit itself against other parties. Recently it has even had to suffer striking reverses at the hustings. It has, now and then, to bow to expediency, to make compromises, if the rigidity of its principles fails to catch the votes. It has to enter into alliances, not always holy. This is the politics of Machiavelli, not the politics of Aristotle ; the politics of the hustings, the politics of adult suffrage. It is based on the realisation that the adult vote symbolises the mechanics of power. Power corrupts. It tends to corrupt not merely the party bosses but even the electorate itself. The vast anonymity of Democracy protects it.

Now, patronage is the essence of the politics of power. Applied to trade and commerce, it means judicious distribution of permits, licenses and quotas ; it may mean condoning of graft. Applied to the press, it may mean the exercise of a little discrimination in issuing advertisement contracts, or contracts for newsprint. Applied to the civil servants, it may mean prospects of promotion or other forms of preferment, for serving party interests. Applied to voters with influence it may mean jobs for their sons and “in-law’s” or some other insidious forms of personal advancement. Or, the Minister himself may in good faith confirm the appointment of his own nephew to a fat-salaried post or the placement of Government orders with a firm in which his near and dear ones may be interested, or advance the interests of his party followers. This is called nepotism, the most degenerate kind of the politics of power. Congressmen who, in the days of the national struggle, had no such lure of office were also politicians. But theirs was the politics of service, of sacrifice. It was not the politics of power. I do not blame the Congress Party as such for this new orientation of the politics of India. The malaise is implicit in the system of Rule by the Majority. We cannot avoid



it because it is the fundamental principle of Parliamentary Government. If *Mr. X* is the leader of a party, he must get a majority before he is allowed to rule. To secure this majority *Mr. X* has to woo, to placate, to satisfy, the most vocal and/or the most influential sections of his voters ; or devise means by which their disquieting roar may be converted into an affectionate *moo*. He has also to keep his own house in order. He must offer special incentives to make his officers work the way he would like. Why should they not put a price on their loyalty to the boss, not to the country—say a share of the widespread graft or of the largesse at the disposal of the boss ? The expectations may range from a sinecure with a fat salary to a transfer to a hill station during the summer, or an ambassadorial assignment in one of the great Chanceries of the world. It is, of course, easy to make a virtue of necessity, or for the conscience to yield to a stronger compulsion. But there are at least three national areas where a flexible conscience and the extension of political influence can be suicidal. One is Defence, another is justice and the third, no less important, is Education.

III

A British Legacy

It is sad to reflect what a mess we have made of the three cherished legacies which the British Raj had left us : the Civil Service, the Judiciary and the English language ; and may we add, fourthly, a widely respected teaching profession, poor but beyond the corrupting influence of politics.

Taking up the Civil Service first, the most seasoned civil servant as well as the juniormost recruit of to-day are at one in underlining their helplessness in the face of the increasing political pressure which is brought to bear upon them in the discharge even of their day-to-day duties from different quarters in the name of the ruling party. From the high-ups at the party headquarters to the functionaries of the Panchayati Raj, the officers in the districts as well as at the metropolis—all are regularly flooded with requests, recommendations and suggestions from political and partisan sources that almost



look like an order or a directive which they dare not refuse. I know of the Principal of a Government sponsored College who had stood up to a considerable degree of strong political pressure from local party bosses to persuade him to condone the serious offence of a boy who had been placed under orders of suspension pending investigation for misconduct. I know of other cases where honest officers had been subjected to continuous harassment from local political bosses. This kind of third degree methods destroy the morale of the services and generates a nervous strain that may cause a permanent damage to their efficiency. An officer looking for promotion is thus hardly in a position to incur the displeasure even of the local party bosses. As for the judiciary, well, even the Chief Justice may, after retirement, look forward to an ambassadorial post, or a nomination to Parliament or selection as the Vice-Chancellor of a University or the Governor of a Province or similar lucrative assignments in the gift of the Executive. It is, of course, quite possible to argue that these appointments have in each case been made on the ground only of suitability and/or special qualifications for the job. It is equally reasonable to argue that even though an assignment may be justified purely on considerations of merit, Caesar's wife must be kept above suspicion. The objection is not so much to the fact that a particular assignment has been made but to the fact that the holders of the high offices as those of a Judge, or a Chairman or member of a Public Service Commission, or the Auditor-General, must feel free to hold the scales even, in a forthright, unambiguous and visible manner between the Government and the people and between different sections of the people as much as between individuals. There should not be any scope for any suggestion or suspicion that their judgment might be vitiated by the prospects of rewards, or expectations of a *quid pro quo*, from any of the parties subject, or even potentially subject, to their adjudication. It would be suicidal, in the larger public interest, to expose those who are called upon to hold such high offices to the temptation to use the same for their own preferment.

The third and, perhaps, the richest legacy of British Rule has been its gift of the English language and literature to India. Paradoxically, the language of our masters also became the language of our freedom. We had fought the British with the help of the language that they understood, and on their own terms. Political concepts with



which the English language and English culture have made us familiar permeate every page of our Constitution. Our educational system, our curricula, or teaching media, are all similarly patterned. This English education, above everything else, has produced and nourished an intellectual class and provided them with the key to open our windows with on to the outer world, has taken us out of our shells and flooded our ancient land with the myriad lights of a new world of culture and enlightenment. The very concept of the Nation and of national unity we have borrowed from the West. In fact, India is not alone in this. The whole of Afro-Asia—China and Japan not excluded—has learnt the language of freedom from the great national movements in Europe and America. The phrase ‘national integration’, of which we hear so much to-day, had no counterpart in the history of India, just as Marxism is not a native Chinese product. No doubt we have to-day grown out of the leading strings of political tutelage, so much so that we have started talking about a *swadeshi* substitute for the English language. True, it is advantageous for a nation to have a common language for mutual understanding. It is also desirable that the common language should be indigenous to the country. English, it is now argued, cannot be the common language of India. It is spoken by a very small percentage of the peoples of India : it is at best the language of the upper classes. We have, therefore, to choose between the several Indian languages listed in our Constitution. Of these, Hindi (or Hindusthani ?) should, it is claimed, be the language of our choice, because it is spoken and understood by the largest number of people in the country. Now, this complex question has already been fully discussed in Chapter XXII of this book. All that I want to point out here is that the denigration of English which has become a concomitant result of this attempt to upgrade Hindi to the status of a national language (or, to be more accurate, the “official language” of the Union of India) is something that would, in the circumstances now prevailing, put the country in reverse gear. As one who has spent nearly half a century of his life as a teacher, I have been noticing with great consternation the rapid deterioration in the standard of English of our boys and girls in the Degree course, not to speak of those who are in the high or higher secondary schools. West Bengal has not taken kindly to Hindi. So, also the south of India has a built-in-



resistance to any attempt to impose this language. Other areas which have regional languages other than Hindi appear to have agreed to it, in not a few cases, as a necessary evil : their knowledge of this language (so far as the common man is concerned) hardly extends beyond the vocabulary of the market-place. While, thus, there is still a good deal of uncertainty as to when and how far Hindi would pass current as the national language of India, as the vehicle of her thought and culture, the sad fact remains that the study of English is being neglected in schools as well as in colleges and that competent teachers of this subject are increasingly difficult to find, which further hastens the process of deterioration, without any acceptable substitute in sight. We may call it the "politics of language". What every right-thinking Indian is afraid of is that since a language cannot be forced on a people, we shall probably be left with a Babel of regional tongues with the gradual disappearance of English. With the aid of English we were once able to extend the frontiers of our own empire of thought. The politics of language, unless tempered with reason and expediency, would soon see us presiding over the liquidation of that truly glorious empire, reducing India, in the process, to a twentieth-century Babel.

IV

Democracy and Education

To return to our original theme : how a subversive spirit, an attitude of defiance, a general sense of indiscipline which characterises student behaviour in India in most of their agitational activities derives its grist from a philosophy of violence with affinities, open or underground, with some foreign Powers and how it is further helped by the politics of power which has exercised its baneful effect even in spheres where the politician should have been out of bounds. It is now necessary to proceed further and point out how the country has developed a politics of education, and how it has affected the teaching profession and the student community.

It would perhaps be too naive to suggest that the temple of learning is a temple which should be kept free from the contaminating touch of politics. I daresay the reply at once would be that nothing is too



sacrosanct for democracy. *Vox populi vox dei* : the people's voice is the voice of God. Therefore, it would be claimed, the democratic Executive as the servant of the democratic Legislature is competent to guide and control education, to impose its will and authority on all stages of education from the nursery to the University, if it is so disposed. It might, however, be conceded that the Executive should leave to the experts the task of framing the syllabus, conducting examinations, grant certificates and diplomas, etc. But in all matters of policy including the appointment of teachers, the constitution of the Boards as well as the constitution of University bodies charged with the formulation and execution of policy, the Government must have an effective voice, and an effective veto, if it comes to that. Besides, the Government invests substantial amounts of tax-payers' money in education in the form of direct expenditure as well as grants-in-aid and it is its contingent duty to see how this money is spent and to take care that it is well-spent. Finally, the State is interested in the end-products of the educational system, for they are the future citizens of the country, and as such it has the right and duty to subject to over-all Government scrutiny the entire educational set-up of the country at all stages. With this end in view, the Government appoints Commissions and Committees, undertakes legislation, establishes Universities by statute, sets up schools and colleges intended to serve as models, makes grants-in-aid, calls for audit reports, etc. It also approves of the appointment of teachers and sends its nominees to the Selection Committees. The Governor is the *ex-officio* Chancellor of most of our Universities, who, when he is present, presides over the meetings of the University Senate or Court. He appoints the Vice-Chancellor. In all this he generally acts on the advice of the Education Minister who would probably consult the Education Secretary before he gives his "advice". The Education Minister is a politician, not necessarily an educationist ; and the Education Secretary, who is a bureaucrat, might have had his last contact with a school and college when he was a student himself. Both the Secretariat and the Directorate have to work within the limitations of official rules and regulations, to go by precedents, to safeguard the interests of the Government, in short, to satisfy the requirements of red tape. This is how a Government Department normally functions and it is quite fit and proper that experienced officers and experts



should advise the Minister and that the Minister should normally accept the advice unless he wants to initiate a new policy or exercise a veto, or is himself an educationist who can teach a thing or two to his subordinates. Those institutions which receive a maintenance grant from the Government are specially liable to detailed control and direction. The Universities which cannot function without generous subventions from the State exchequer are also being increasingly subjected to Secretariat, or worse still, political control.

In exercising this control, it is seldom that the politician in the Minister is put to sleep. He has diverse ways and opportunities by which he can subserve his party interests. Nothing can prevent him, for example, from appointing a party-man as Vice-Chancellor, or even as a Judge. Elective posts in the University bodies may be similarly filled up by party nominees with the connivance of the relevant authorities who themselves may form part of the political ring and are dependent on State patronage. A *quid pro quo* is thus discreetly established, to the mutual advantage of both the parties. But, then, there is an uneasy feeling, a certain scepticism, if not cynicism, which such appointments are apt to generate. It infects the larger section of educationists who stand outside of the charmed circle. It sets a bad example to the students when they hear their teachers' comments on such appointments, or witness their discomfiture. It is quite possible, again, that this attitude on the part of the critics is the result of pique, of personal jealousies, or even of rivalries, and their own frustration. The sense of frustration may, on the other hand, be the product of a genuine feeling that the key to speedy recognition is the political affiliation of the person who is the appointing authority or the political pull of the person appointed plus or minus his merits. The favourite, on the other hand, must have known his ropes. The answer to this probably would be to appoint an independent University Services Commission which would finally decide on all faculty as well as high administrative appointments in the gift of the University with the help of experts or assessors. But, perhaps, the politics of patronage will rule out this heresy.

*The Politics of the Street*

Let us now turn to the case of the teachers. As matters stand, there is no doubt that this is the most harassed section of those who are engaged in national service. Their pay and emoluments are, perhaps, the lowest among the salaried classes with similar status and qualifications. Their role in society cannot be over-estimated. "The success of all plans of development", wrote the University Grants Commission in its annual Report for 1963-64, "largely depends upon the ability and devotion of teachers". Everything possible, it said, should be done to attract a reasonable proportion of our men and women of high intellectual ability to this profession. If the lot of College teachers (whom the University Grants Commission had in view) is bad, that of school teachers is worse. In ancient times also, teachers were not well-paid but society kept them above want. What they (the teachers) lacked in material possessions they made up for in the esteem and respect they enjoyed in society. In India of to-day, teachers are treated with scant respect by the affluent sections of the society as well as by the powers that be. It was reported that when, a few years ago, a deputation of school teachers waited upon a high official in the Education Department of the West Bengal Government and drew his attention to the fact that they (the teachers) drew a pay less than that of his orderlies and peons, they were facetiously told by the high officer concerned: "Why, whoever prevents you from applying for a post of a bearer in my office?" or words to that effect. Now, if this is regarded as a typical instance of the kind of treatment that is meted out to our teachers, it should not be difficult to appreciate why they should not combine in something like trade unions to take political action for the proper recognition of their status.

It is possible that the high Education Officer mentioned in the previous paragraph was misquoted but it is also true that the teachers have started feeling that until they in fact developed a trade union mentality, they would go on being persistently ignored when the scales of pay of the other sections of workers were repeatedly allowed significant

increments. There are the Labour Unions which keep a persistent pressure on the employers for the improvement of the service conditions of the workers. A strike paralyses the productive effort of the community and puts the employer to loss ; to prevent it is thus a matter of direct and palpable interest to the employer as well as the larger community. Sometimes a strike is accompanied by violent demonstrations. Picketing is resorted to to make the strike successful ; the manager may be "imprisoned", or in current phraseology, "gheraoed" by the striking employees ; and there may happen other unseemly developments. Ultimately, the management yields to the pressure. The Government also have frequently succumbed to such pressure tactics when these have been sufficiently prolonged and powerfully supported. Now, the teachers are—or until recently were—a meek lot, used by tradition to silent suffering. They have had no trade union affiliations, no propaganda machinery to put pep into their fight for justice. So they continued to be the Cinderellas of the community, unwept, unhonoured, unsung. It is now different. The scene has undergone a significant change in recent years. There is increasing social awareness of the unhappy lot of our teachers, some recognition of their important role in society. The Constitution has even provided them with seats in the legislature. That has given them a political status. The U. G. C. also recognizes the importance of the teachers in the task of nation-building. But, in spite of these professions, deeds have not matched promises. The teachers, too, have learnt the lesson that the only way to awaken the authorities from their somnolence is the adoption of organized agitational methods ; in short, to turn into politicians.

The politics of the teachers, however, can be academically as questionable as that of any other selfish group. It means that teachers would leave their classes to join processions ; that they would stage hunger strikes and, if the situation so warrants, noisy demonstrations ; that they would parade the streets with lurid posters ; and that, if necessary, they would even face police action and court arrest. They have so far been discreet enough to avoid slogan-shouting or the use of loud publicity material or unbecoming language. They have, however, marched on the streets of Calcutta and elsewhere silently, and with as much dignity as they could collect under the circumstances. But they have followed the usual tactics in all other respects. They



would, if necessary, "refrain" from taking their classes. They would, if necessary, refuse to participate in the work of examinations ; they would squat on the streets, in the full view of passing traffic : in fact, they would make use of all manner of pressure tactics to see that their demands are fulfilled. And all this within the visual range of their students. Need we be surprised, if in the process, in the students' estimate, indiscipline takes on a new status, even a new dignity ?

Lest I should be misunderstood, I must make it perfectly clear that I extend my full and unqualified support to the demands of our teachers for better pay and prospects, for more humane conditions of work. I may also go so far as to subscribe to their view that our Government frequently requires shock treatment for being moved to action, particularly in those cases in which they are not directly affected. It is a grave tragedy and an indictment of society that our teachers and professors should have to ventilate their grievances in this fashion. But there is another angle to it. It is this that, rightly or wrongly, politics has entered into the bone and marrow of the teaching profession. Teachers are fast developing a strong trade union mentality, a pattern of joint aggressive action, and using pressure tactics for the attainment of their objects. They are missing their classes or lectures, or otherwise refraining from their duties, and not considering it as wrong. In other words, silent suffering is no longer considered to be the time-honoured badge of the profession. Teachers have come to believe that with the struggle for existence daily getting harder, there is, for sheer survival, no alternative to militant action ; and the fact is that it has a large measure of popular support, particularly from left-wing politicians. But the effects of this kind of politics can be far-reaching. Examples, we tell our students, are better than precepts. Students will, therefore, be deeply influenced by their teachers' conduct. To society also there is this lesson : that they have reduced our teachers to the same level as the ordinary wage-earners and compelled them to enter the arena of vulgar demonstrations.

So we find that the entire society, from its top echelons to its common base, is held captive in politics. In a period of acute frustration with no prospect of speedy relief or redress, everything tends to



become politics ; so why not education ? It offers such a rich field for political activity. The student agitators feel vicariously happy when they find their " master-mohasayas " toeing the line of agitation. After all, they cannot do half the mischief that their elders are capable of doing. Discipline, after all, is a two-way traffic. The *guru* is a teacher transferring a part of his personality to his disciple, not merely by word of mouth but by personal example : the disciple receiving it with reverence. Society itself followed the discipline of the *Varnāśrama*. Even the King would stand up from the throne and touch the feet of his *guru*, clad in the plainest of attire, as he entered his (the King's) presence. To the *Sanyāsī* flocked thousands of the weary pilgrims of life for comfort and enlightenment. We to-day are too overburdened with material cares and anxieties. These we brood upon until they assume the proportions of a demon who kills the divine spark in us. Another name for this demon is politics, the politics of the street, so compelling, yet so unbecoming of our teachers, so adverse to our students' urgent interests !

VI

Government and the University

How to rescue our education from this debasing type of politics, to rehabilitate an almost vanishing ideal ? To hark back to the old ideals of education will be, perhaps, too much to expect. The *tapovan* has vanished, never to return. But there is, as Rabindranath Tagore said, the " tapovana " of the mind yet in us. Can we find the time, and the spirit of dedication, to make these *tapovans* of the mind the *mahāvihāras* of our spirit ?

We must consider it our first task to see that education reflects the autonomy of the mind. This cannot be secured unless education is freed from the politics of power and patronage, of self and self. The responsibility of the Government should be clearly differentiated from the field that belongs to the University. The University is the nursery of the nation's ideals. No doubt the State which provides the funds should ensure that the money is properly accounted for. The State will also, in consultation with appropriate university bodies, lay down the statutes which will determine the



structural pattern of the University and prescribe the powers and functions of the different authorities of the university. It will also lay down the limits of State control. Within these limits, the university should have full powers of control and supervision over its own affairs, over its faculties, its research activities and over its constituent and affiliated colleges. It all depends at what point the limits are reached. To the argument that in a democracy, the State should be free to extend its control over all aspects of university activities except those of a purely academic nature, the answer may be given in the words of late Asutosh Mookerjee :

"When a democracy imperiously demands control over the University, I answer without hesitation, 'pause my friends, your claim would become admissible only when democracy ceases to be democracy and is transformed into an intellectual aristocracy'."

A few months before his death, at the Convocation of the Lucknow University, he said :

"Believe me, it is the function of the University, to raise the nation, to guide the nation, to elevate the leadership of the democracy, not to be guided by them."

There should, however, be little scope for any serious differences over the import of these words as long as both the university and the Government are inspired by the same ideals of improving the educational standards of our people and to strengthen the teaching as well as the research base of our universities. What is desired is that the university should not be subjected to the vagaries of party politics. The politician, in the narrow sense of the term, should not, as such, be allowed to disturb the atmosphere of academic discipline. Equally circumspect should be the politician-teacher or the teacher-politician. The student politician who uses the class-room or the university campus for campaigning on behalf of political parties and seeks to disturb the even tenor of university life should be black-marked before he is able to do greater mischief to the cause of student discipline. It must always be remembered that it is not a narrow partisan spirit but humanism in its broadest sense that the university preaches to its alumni.

In India where political parties, generally speaking, have still to reach the level of parliamentary sobriety found among the major political parties of the leading democracies of the West, the Govern-



ment should not directly involve itself in the internal affairs of a university. The uncertainties of political partisanship should not be allowed to add to the worries of academic life. It is also essential that a university should be free to pursue its ideal in an atmosphere of peace and quiet, free of petty cares and anxieties.

This means that every seat of learning should be adequately endowed, or otherwise freed from perpetual financial worry for carrying on its normal functions. As for its programmes of expansion, whether it be the creation of new faculties or developing the existing ones or the provision for greater facilities of research, the proposals or schemes for the same should be assessed not by a Government Department but by an independent body of experts which will also adjudicate on the amount of financial assistance required to give effect to the scheme. This purpose will be best served if there is a University Grants Committee in every State on the lines of the University Grants Commission at the Centre, endowed with similar powers, with, perhaps this difference that so far as university education is concerned, the University Grants Committee should not only be enabled to allot funds for developmental purposes, both recurring and non-recurring, but also help the Government to fix the maintenance budget. The Committee will cater to the needs of all the universities in the State other than those that are met by the University Grants Commission at the Centre. As the State will provide the funds to the State Committee, all schemes of expansion should naturally be subject to State sanction and audit. In fact, the establishment of a University Grants Committee for each State should be one of the main devices for keeping politics out of education. As a further and necessary safeguard, no member of the Committee should be allowed to take up any other job under the Government after retirement.

To give our educational system a wider national background, the Centre, with proper safeguards, should have the power to lay down guide-lines of a national educational policy, to assist the States in carrying out national schemes of development, to set forth standards in co-operation with the University Grants Commission, as well as to help in the speedy implementation of urgent U. G. C. policies. To secure these essential objectives, the Concurrent List

should be revised accordingly. The case for an all-India Educational Service should also be considered. This would be a relatively small cadre consisting of highly distinguished scholars and educators with international reputation on an attractive pay scale. They would be specialists and would concentrate on research and assist in advanced teaching work. For this purpose they would be assigned to different Centres of Advanced Studies including Universities. This cadre may also have a proportion of "Exchange Teachers" drawn from the States. There is no doubt that with the States' co-operation, so that there is proper co-ordination of work, such an all-India cadre would provide an antidote to narrow regionalism and establish, in the academic field, a sense of community among teachers belonging to different States. In fact, a thorough reorganization of the educational system, from the highest to the lowest levels, is the basic requirement of the India that we are about to build up. The aim throughout should be to build up a national system ; and it should make education for this purpose aim high. The long-term objective should be to help create a new leadership —the leadership of an intellectual *elite*—which would help to give a new turn to the present dialectics of India's student movement. We have to create, at the same time, a new type of politicians who would co-operate in promoting the good life of our students based on a correct appreciation of our educational problems. This is the kind of politics, and this is the kind of politicians, that our nation needs, and this alone is the path to rescue our teachers as well as our students from the present crisis of confidence.

Have we now found the answer to the conundrum that, if there is an effect, there must be a cause ? The fact that politics is now eroding our educational system has lessened the student's respect for purely academic pursuits which now bore him and draw him, instead, into the wrong, but exciting, brand of student politics. It is the politics of power at the student level, just as their elders had very often tried to convert the educational system into a political medium for subserving party interests. Student leaders thus get a training in political tactics with allegiance neither to their teacher nor to the other authorities of the college, but to outside political factions out to establish their control over the student-body now termed as the " Student Front". The term " student unity " takes,



under these circumstances, a sinister significance ; that is, it is unity which can all the more be easily and effectively exploited by the political bosses. Thus we find how deep the roots of student indiscipline have struck. Indeed, I am not sure how far the suggestion to make the colleges and the universities out of bounds for this type of politics would be a feasible proposition.

This type of politics—I have said. But there is a politics of a nobler kind which elevates man. Notwithstanding all that I have said I would still support the cause of this other variety of politics, that is, if it bears the connotation that Aristotle put upon it : the art and the science of good life.

VII

The Dead End ?

Obviously, if the siren call of politics is to be resisted, our teachers as well as students require a meaningful educational programme to attract them, dynamic in its concept and challenging in its execution. There should be a perfect understanding that student agitation, in particular, should not get involved in the quicksands of party politics, but should be raised to the level of a purely academic movement, or an issue of the campus, first by recognising the need for a change (but not sitting on it thereafter) and then taking steps for its consideration by the relevant Board and Faculty of the University. Student participation in such consultations along with the Dons would at once raise the level of the agitation, or rather convert it into a serious, creative movement instead of being a mere political stunt with a "demonstration effect". During the course of a student's academic career, there may be numerous occasions to underline the need for teacher-student participation in resolving academic issues—even to the point of deliberately creating such issues. Even active political issues may be given an academic look through well-conducted disputations, which might obtain a release for some of the energy used up in vacuous "demonstrations". It is quite possible that the active student "leaders" borne on party cadres will not be weaned away from trouble-shooting by such devices. But it should be possible to

isolate them if the general body of students are assured of a more creative participation in teacher-student or faculty-student conferences provided there are teachers willing to come forward to act as friends, philosophers and guides. These conferences may not generate political heat but their impact on academic life is likely to be no less stimulating.

It is a common concern that education has got mixed up with politics because politicians in their craze for power, and their student followers lured by the glamour of power politics, cannot afford to leave the virgin field of young minds alone. The situation is made worse because of the lack of alternative leadership. It is not merely a case of personal failure. The failure is more due to the lack of an alternative programme planned in an imaginative way and sufficiently attractive to hold the students' interest. This alternative programme should be linked up with the total educational effort of the student community. Some idea of such a programme has been given in the preceding chapter.¹ The time that the students now take off for political activity is actually at the cost of their academic work and account for a large number of "drops" at the university examinations. The alternative programme would rather stop such wastage. It would be supplementary to normal class work, not in substitution thereof.

The idea behind the alternative programme is the fact that participation in agitational politics by the general body of students is possibly due to the general sense of vacuity from which they suffer. The agitations in which they are invited to participate to some extent restores their self-respect and satisfies their unmonitored ego. Frustrated in their own academic life for a variety of reasons, these boys fall easy and ready victims to any blandishments—particularly when they are attractively phrased—that give them a chance to assert themselves as heroes in a Cause. I do not deny that a few of these may join such activity with a full sense of what they are doing. But the majority, I suspect, are merely moved by the false glamour of their newly acquired political role, by a sort of crowd psychology which, had there been something else worthwhile to

¹ See Chapter XXIII.



attract them and give them a sense of belonging rather than a feeling of being unwanted waifs or orphans, would have failed to exercise its hypnotic spell on these poor creatures. It is here that the politicians must take their share of responsibility along with other groups—the authorities of the colleges and universities, as well as the Government. One cannot, of course, ignore the limitations of the situation, nor is it of any use to move in a world of wishful thinking. In India, it is the writ of the politician that runs, not that of the educationist, for the country's unwritten protocol places the teacher at the tail-end. Until and unless we raise the level of politics so that the value of education and the importance of keeping it out of harm's way may be realised by our leaders, and until the intellectual community of the country is rehabilitated, we shall be proceeding towards the wrong end, to find perhaps, that it is the dead end.

A PROGRAMME IN PERSPECTIVE

I

Towards a National Policy on Education

Reference has been made in Chapter XXII of this book to the Government Resolution embodying what is set forth as a National Policy on Education announced on July 17, 1968, by the Indian Ministry of Education, after a great deal of discussion and debate. Though the Resolution reflects the current thinking of the Government of India on the various subjects covered by it, it is by no means a satisfying document. Public response has been lukewarm. The opinion of the country's educationists is yet to be crystallised. The final blueprint will presumably await this process. This chapter, a sort of post-script to what has gone before (because the author has so far largely refrained from projecting his own views into what was primarily intended to be an objective assessment of our educational system as it has developed over the years), is now presented to his readers to indicate, in concrete terms, the author's understanding of the major educational problems facing the country in the context of our national needs. The author also begs leave to present, though with considerable diffidence, certain proposals in regard to these problems for what they are worth, in the hope that they may present some additional points for debate and consideration or, perhaps, throw some new light on our understanding of these problems.

Education being a State subject, a national policy can be effective only within the limits of the Seventh Schedule of our Constitution or by a general consensus among the State Departments of Education, in so far as matters under their direct control are concerned, by accepting the Centre's lead and guidance. The Mudaliar Commission has already indicated the reasons why the Centre is vitally interested, along with the States, in the improvement of our educational system. The main reason really is that an Indian belongs not merely to his home State but he is a citizen of India and as such

the whole country is vitally interested in the kind of education that he receives. The articulation of a national policy is, therefore, an imperative, a political imperative in the larger sense, if the integrity and unity of the nation is to be preserved. That the Centre on its part will have to tread the path with great caution is already indicated by the country-wide turmoil that its language policy has provoked. The reconciliation of national sovereignty with State rights is truly an extremely hazardous adventure. The installation of non-Congress Governments in many of our States in recent years has, of course, added a new dimension to the situation and made the need for circumspection all the greater.

Fortunately, just as there are likely to be sharp diversities of views on the different aspects of the educational problem, certain points of broad agreement also appear to have emerged and certain trends of thinking crystallised. All are agreed, for instance, that the Education Budgets of the Centre and the States should be considerably augmented if a real national policy on education is to be properly implemented. In fact, the allotments made in the Union Budget for Education or in the allocations suggested by the Planning Commission for the Fourth Plan cast doubts on the seriousness of our purpose in tackling the problems of our education. Among the other points of general agreement are the following :

- (1) Education is a powerful force for national integration and Government policy should do nothing to impair that aspect of the country's educational system.
- (2) A common language goes a long way to unify the people.
- (3) Full employment should be the aim of educational programmes. "Work experience" should be an integral part of the educational system, particularly at the secondary stage.
- (4) Educational standards, especially in its higher stages, should be improved and brought up to the same level as in the leading universities of the world. This applies particularly to Science education.
- (5) Examination systems should make the fullest use of modern techniques.
- (6) Student indiscipline should give way to student collaboration. This should imply faculty-student participation in certain aspects of university affairs and a greater emphasis on extra-curricular activities.
- (7) Teacher training facilities should be augmented.

(8) Compulsory and free education up to Class VIII. No one should be deprived of education because of poverty.

(9) The medium of education should be the mother tongue or the regional language. (There is some difference of opinion as to how far up this principle should be extended). The multi-lingual character of India imposes an obligation on the students to learn more than one language while in school.

(10) The pay and emoluments of teachers of all categories should be made attractive and they should be given their rightful status in society. This is a matter of top-priority.

(11) Adult education should receive effective recognition as one of the essential bases of a national educational policy.

While these points reflect the area of general agreement, there are certain other vital areas of national life which, despite the consensus hitherto reached, are still exposed to controversy. One such relates to the question of a national-cum-official language for all India, and the place of English in school and college curricula. Another is the three-language formula. A third is connected with the question of a common medium of education up to the post-graduate stage. Still another area of controversy surrounds the question of introducing religious and moral instruction in schools and colleges. The question of quality *versus* quantity—of consolidation *versus* expansion—as a regulator of the spread of higher education in the country has also evoked sharp differences in the field of educational policy. Restriction of admission to colleges and universities is also hotly criticised by those who insist on the "democratic right" of all students to proceed to higher education.¹ The extent of Government control over education continues to be a bone of contention for a long time now. Further, whether students and/or teachers should practise

¹ Here is what Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) says about the right to education :

"Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.....". (italics are mine).



politics within the college campus has raised great heat but little light. The problem of University autonomy has long been an issue between the political wing of the Government and the lay public. New legislation has more or less ignored the circumstances that underline the supreme need for preserving the autonomy of the University ; and this inspite of vehement public protests.

Certain other ideas have also been put across from different quarters for assisting the growth of a common national consciousness. One such idea made current by the Education Commission (1964-66) is that of "common schools" and "neighbourhood schools". The idea needs to be further examined. Another is that of compulsory national or social service to be demanded of every student at the First Degree level. The build-up of an opposition against Public Schools because of their "class" character is a concomitant of the new attitude. Somewhat incongruous with this attitude is the proposal for constituting some of the Universities of India as "major" universities for privileged treatment to serve as pace-setters for other Universities and also as a means for national integration. The idea of a National University has also received considerable attention.

All these show a welcome re-awakening of interest in a proper assessment of our educational needs from the point of view of national integration and development. It only remains to reach a full consensus on the issues raised and to spell these out in more concrete and precise terms.

II

Policy and principles

At the meeting of the Central Advisory Board of Education held in September, 1967, P. N. Kripal, Secretary to the Union Ministry of Education, spoke of "five points" which according to him, should be kept in mind in making a policy statement. Such a statement, he said, should identify the new directions of change and, then, these must be concretely related to an immediate programme of action. There must be complete consensus and a reasonable assurance of resources. The statement, he said further, should also specify the methods of implementing the policy.

A Policy Resolution has since been announced. It is a broad frame-work ; and like any plan designed to meet the needs of a complex situation, it is born of conflict and contradictions. This Plan, or any alternative to it, must, however, satisfy certain broad tests. These tests are based on the following considerations, namely, (i) its feasibility in practical terms, (ii) its compatibility with the "directions of change", (iii) its flexibility to meet future needs and (iv) its public acceptability.

It will be at once seen that many of the proposals that are being debated fail on one or the other of the tests of feasibility and acceptability. There is also the possibility that the successful application of one test may run into difficulty when followed by another test. Thus, a scheme which may find favour with the public may not be practically feasible in the existing context. There is also difficulty in regard to what exactly may be meant by public acceptability. This is one of the reasons why a "consensus" is difficult to achieve in regard to most of the questions that sharply divide the public. In such cases, only a negative consensus—the consensus that nothing should be done to disturb the *status quo*—or, better still, the postponement of the consensus till more propitious times, will be the only way out, if a decision is not to be forced. In educational matters, where the powers of the Union and the State Governments are demarcated under the Constitution, a solution simply cannot be imposed by one party on the other. If, however, there is a broad understanding on the necessity of a consensus and on the urgency of substantive changes being effected, in the national interest, and in a true federal spirit, the different sections of the people may be more ready to enter into constructive parleys for reaching a mutually acceptable solution. Hence the need for patience and the widest possible participation in discussion at all levels by people representative of different lines of thinking.

Apart from formulating schemes of educational development that might figure in the detailed mosaic of a national programme based on consensus, there are two more important questions to be decided. One is the question of priorities ; the other is that of resources. Evidently, some of the schemes must be taken up before others. Thus, for instance, before we can take in hand schemes of development at the higher stages, the problem of mass illiteracy of



the people at the base must be firmly tackled. The millions who are going without education, children as well as adults, must first be educated. One must pass through the school before one can go in for a Degree. This, of course, does not mean that all higher education must stop until every Indian gets a basic education. It means that there should be, first of all, an understanding that some things are more urgent than others, and, secondly, that there should be a proper husbanding of scarce resources. India is now suffering from an inadequacy of resources and every rupee should be most effectively spent for meeting national needs. Hence the question of priorities, to prevent our plans from becoming top-heavy. A Rolls-Royce, it is obvious, cannot run well with a bullock-cart as a trailer.

III

The Structural Aspect

We first take up the educational structure in India. The structure includes the following stages : pre-primary, primary (lower and upper), secondary, higher secondary, under-graduate leading to the first Degree (B.A./B.Sc./B.Com.), and post-graduate leading to the second degree (M.A./M.Sc./M.Com.), besides special types of education (technical, vocational and professional).

At present, the pre-primary or pre-school stage (nursery, kindergarten, Montessori etc.) belongs to the private domain. The State can help with teaching aids, audio-visual apparatus and other equipment. For the majority of the too young, however, the home is the best school, but in India, it is not, because of untrained, illiterate, ignorant parents. If this stage of education is to be included within the national pattern, it will be necessary to make arrangements for the training of mothers, for teaching mother-craft. Whether such training can be devetailed into a scheme of adult education may be explored. Graduates in home science, health visitors and social welfare workers, people with family planning training, can render considerable help at this stage of education.

As regards the succeeding stages of education, the Education Commission has proposed a 12-year school course, abolition of the pre-university course, and a three-year Degree course. These pro-

posals belong to an area of acute public controversy. The arguments for abolishing the 11-class schools do not appear to be convincing. On the contrary the arguments in favour of retaining them are comparatively more cogent. Most important of these is the fact that the State Governments have already made heavy investments for upgrading the former 10-class secondary schools. In view of the difficulties already experienced for finding the necessary resources and qualified teaching personnel for these schools, it is not expedient to add another class to them. Nor is it strictly necessary, because the same object can be better achieved by adding one year more to the existing P-U. classes. That, I submit, would also be more economical and academically more sound. The two "breaks"—at Class XI of Higher Secondary Schools and Class II of the P-U. Course—would be more suitable for diversion to the vocational and professional courses. I would, therefore, suggest : 11-class higher secondary schools, followed by a 2-year pre-university course. This, in turn, would be followed by the first Degree course. Here also, I would recommend a change to mitigate the present wastage at the Degree level. At present, the Degree course is of three years' duration, for "Pass" students as well as for "Honours" students. I would suggest that in view of the proposed 2-year pre-university course, the "Pass" Degree course might be a 2-year and the Honours Degree course a 3-year course. The reason is that the Pass Course students do not actually require 3 years to complete their course. The stages in terms of duration (number of years) for each would, then, be as follows, compared to the existing system and the proposals of the Education Commission (1964-66) :

Duration of Course (in years) West Bengal

	(A)	(B)		(C)
	Existing	Proposed by	As here	
	Either	Or	Educ. Com.	Proposed
Secondary/S.F.	10	10
Higher Secondary	..	11	..	11
Pre-University	1	2
First Degree	..	3	3	2 or 3
Total period	..	14	14	15* or 16*

*15 years for those going for a pass Degree and 16 years for those studying for an Honours Degree.

The total duration in the three cases would thus be 14, 15 and 15/16 years (depending on whether the student has taken a Pass course or an Honours course) respectively. It may be recalled that both the Radhakrishnan and Mudaliar Commissions had proposed a total duration of 15 years (with a 12-year school course), the same as now proposed by the Kothari Commission. Under my proposal (C), the total duration remains 15 years for the Pass course students who constitute about 90 per cent of the total number of those studying for the first Degree ; only the Honours students will have to study for one year more. The justification for the modifications proposed as well as for the addition of one extra year to the total period of education under the third proposal—(C) as above—could be catechised as follows :

Q. 1. Why 11-class schools and not 12-class ?

Because, in view of the 2-year pre-university course suggested, a 12-year school is not necessary.

Q. 2. Why not 10-class schools ?

Because the nation has invested a lot of money in the 11-class schools which have already engaged qualified teachers, improved their pay-scales, purchased necessary scientific and technical instruments and apparatus etc. It must not do to forget that in India our resources are scarce and we just cannot afford to write off several crores of rupees that have been invested in upgrading the 10-class schools.

Q. 3. Why not accept the recommendation, so authoritatively supported, for a 12-year school course followed by the three-year Degree course ?

Because experience has shown that the Government (as in West Bengal) has failed to provide the means or the resources to upgrade all the 10-class schools, and provide at the same time for necessary expansion. In all-India, as we write, only a third of the existing number of 10-class schools could be upgraded. If that is so, the proposal for a 12-class school course would be hardly feasible on account of the huge additional expense that it would entail. Moreover, there is also likely to be a serious lack of qualified teachers, particularly in science, to take the higher classes. Therefore, attention should better be concentrated on upgrading the remaining ten-class schools to eleven-class schools,

Q. 4. Why a 2-year Pre-University course?

Because it would help the students to attain the minimum maturity, intellectually as well as emotionally, to do justice to the new Degree course, if the standard of the latter is to be improved. Besides, it would enable the students to get adjusted to the responsibilities of College life and act as a sort of buffer between the school course and the Degree course.

Q. 5. Will not a possible shortage of competent teachers affect the addition of one more class to the college courses by making the P.-U. class a 2-year course?

Yes, but the shortage might not be so serious as in the case of schools. It is often found that young persons holding a good M.A. or M.Sc. degree do not favour teaching posts in secondary schools but would accept the same in Colleges even on a lower pay. Those who, for economic reasons, are forced to join a school leave it at the first opportunity. It is possible, however, that with the improved social status of school teachers, and with a less heavy work-load, this reluctance to accept teaching posts in schools would disappear.

Q. 6. Why a 2-year Pass (Degree) course and 3-year Honours course?

Because with a 2-year pre-University class the B.A. pass course syllabi in different subjects would not require more than 2 years' instruction. Even at present, under the Calcutta University Regulations, for instance, a pass course student has to do altogether only 4 papers—one paper in each of the two pass course subjects together with two pass papers in English in the third year degree class, for Part II of the first Degree examination. These papers could easily be accommodated in a 2-year Degree (pass) course and additionally release the whole of the third year for intensive Honours teaching, providing time for seminars, field work, extended laboratory hours etc. The necessity for more intensive work would be particularly felt if the Honours courses were further expanded or improved to bring them in line with modern standards.

The Education Commission even visualises a longer period of study for certain specialised courses. And, that, again, would involve the question of the availability of additional staff and other resources, besides problems of accommodation and adjustment.



It is the author's contention that if an additional year is at all required and provided, it should rather be used to strengthen the base. This, in fact, is another reason why a 2-year P.U. course is recommended. In any case, nothing need prevent a University from introducing a 4-year Honours or a 3-year M.A/M.Sc. course in selected subjects, if it is desired, as always, subject, to the availability of resources.

Q. 7. Will not a 2-year Pass course and a 3-year Honours course create complications when two sets of candidates clamour for admission to the post-graduate classes, of which one set of candidates has had undergone a year less of study ?

At present, in the case of the major subjects of the M.A. and M.Sc. courses, only those candidates who have taken their first Degree with Honours in the corresponding subjects are assured of a place in the post-graduate classes. Next in order come the candidates who had prosecuted a regular course of study in the Honours course but failed to qualify for Honours and were allowed to pass in the Pass course. A candidate who has simply passed in the pass course can have little chance, even under present conditions, for admission to the M.A. or M.Sc. courses in the major subjects with a comparatively limited number of seats. If that is so, the position would not be materially affected under the proposed scheme. In the case of other subjects, a candidate holding a pass degree may, under the new proposals, be allowed to appear at an Honours subject for a special certificate after the lapse of a specified period after his passing the first Degree examination. The present practice of admitting students holding a pass degree together with those holding an Honours degree to the post-graduate classes tends definitely to lower the quality of teaching and encourage dubious methods of study ; it ultimately forces the incompetent students to seek for " suggestions " as well as the help of coaching schools, cram books, bazar notes etc., and if these fail, even to have recourse to large scale malpractices at the examination halls. Else, there would be a large percentage of failure at the examinations.

The changes in the structural pattern suggested above are based on the lessons of actual experience of both under-graduate and post-



graduate teaching in one of the largest universities of India. It is true that under the proposed system, Honours students would have one more year added to the total period of education—16 years instead of 15 years as proposed by the Education Commission. This, however, is considered unavoidable, in view of the reasons stated, if educational standards are to be really improved.

A discussion of the structural pattern of education would be incomplete without reference to the existing coverage of the school-going population in India and the requirement that educational opportunities should be equalised. I would suggest :

- (1) that the problem of mass education should be treated as priority No. 1 in educational planning ; our efforts should be directed towards the fulfilment of the Constitutional Directive regarding the introduction of free and compulsory education up to age 14, or class VIII of secondary schools. In fact, I should recommend that free tuition should be provided for all students attending secondary schools up to class XI ;
- (2) that " public schools " may be allowed to exist in a few select areas but it should be diverted of its class character by providing for a sufficient number of free places for meritorious students coming from the poorer sections of the community. Other places should be paid for ;
- (3) the idea of " common schools " or " neighbourhood schools " may be further examined as to their utility, and
- (4) there should be a uniform pay-scale for teachers of both primary and secondary schools.

IV

Medium of Instruction and Language Teaching

As already indicated, there is no difference of opinion about the mother-tongue or the regional language being the medium of instruction up to the higher secondary stage. Differences have arisen over the question whether the regional language should be the medium of instruction in the higher stages of education also.



There should have been no controversy on this question but for two facts : first, the present entrenched position of English and the historical role that it has played in bringing about the intellectual renaissance of India and inspiring the nationalist movement under the leadership, chiefly, of English-educated Indians ; and second, the comparatively poor state of development of the Indian languages to serve as an educational medium in the higher stages of study and research. The question is also complicated by the fact that it is connected with the Constitutional provisions relating to the "official language" of India, Hindi (with all its deficiencies) being selected for this high status on the ground, mainly, that it is spoken by the largest single group of Indians. This fact is also responsible for the view that it should be adopted as the "link" language of India in replacement of English which is regarded as the inter-communicating medium of the educated classes and which the common people do not understand. The position and importance of English are, however, freely recognised not only in its own right but also because it has served India so well as an international link language. The effect of these views, so far as the educational system is concerned is seen in the emergence of "Three-Language Formula."

If these questions are to be discussed within the matrix of Indian unity and national integration, the least that can be said, having regard to the strong feelings they have roused over large areas of the country and the extremist posture already adopted in some of the States in furtherance of these views, is that the issue has been prematurely forced. It has aroused feelings which, if not assuaged properly, might take a more intractable form and actually defeat the processes of national integration. In fact, the language question has already assumed the character of a disruptive, if not explosive, force. It has been a very wise decision not to force the issue and impose Hindi on an unwilling people. But certain steps are being taken which have unmistakably taken away from the grace of an impartial position. That official ambivalence as well as the attitude of the Hindi protagonists is not consistent with the logic of the situation as it obtains today has been explained elsewhere in some detail.¹ Without repeating the arguments here it may be stated

¹ See Chapter XXII.



that, whatever might be the official policy in the future set up, the limitations of the present situation and the effect on it of the present policy of the Government requires careful reflection before further steps are taken involving the country into commitments that might ultimately result in a country-wide linguistic mutiny.

The three-language formula may, for the present, exclude Hindi, so that it is reduced to a two-language formula : English, and the regional language. If there is to be a third language, it should be definitely Sanskrit, I need not repeat why this should be so.

So far as Hindi is concerned, the author still feels that the official language of the Indian Union should be English but translations of official documents should be made available to the States in any of the languages listed in Schedule VIII if a State so want. Inter-Ministry or inter-Departmental communication within the Union Government or agencies thereof may be done in English and Hindi ; communications between Hindi-speaking States may be done through Hindi, but if there is a substantial minority of non-Hindi speaking people, then in both English and Hindi. The U.P.S.C.'s examinations, except in the language papers, should continue to be held in English. Any alternative is, in the existing circumstances, bound to expose the whole system to endless complications, if not grave abuses. In case of any dispute as to interpretation (due to defects in translation, particularly of technical terms and expression), the English version would be authoritative ; further, if Hindi is imposed on non-Hindi speaking areas, it would benefit a very small percentage of the people who might have business with or settle in Hindi-speaking areas. In the non-Hindi speaking regions, Hindi would serve as a link language for these few only. To a Tamilian, Hindi would be as much a foreign tongue as English, with this further difference that English is already functioning as a link language among all educated people and it would be unwise to put an anti-national complexion on its continued use. Relative to the present percentage of literacy in India, the proportion of people knowing English is surprisingly large and they are to be found in all parts of India ; for the area comprising West Bengal, Assam, Nagaland and Orissa, in addition to the whole of the Deccan, Hindi is no better than a regional language, though the region is large ; and, finally, even conceding the claim of Hindi to be used as a link language for all India, seeing that



the link language is largely meant for the common people, it would be enough for them to know a form of colloquial Hindi with a stock of commonly used Hindi words and phrases. It is not necessary that for this purpose that Hindi should be included as a compulsory school subject. Schools might, however, find it necessary and useful to provide for simplified classes in Hindi and, where conditions so require, in other modern Indian languages also. For this the State Government should provide ready assistance.

It is necessary to add that the nation as a whole should pledge its resources to the development of all the major languages of the country. One of the immediate tasks ahead will be to prepare an authoritative glossary of Indian language equivalents for foreign terms and phrases. One of these languages will sooner or later attain the position of a real link language for all India. It will not require any State fiat for this purpose ; it will stand in its own right.

V

A National Policy for Higher Education and Research

Though in laying down priorities, questions like the total removal of illiteracy including adult illiteracy, rapid expansion of primary education and the improvement of teacher status should get precedence over other questions, problems of higher education and research cannot be set aside as of minor significance. A nation is made known to the world at large through the gateway of higher learning, scholastic achievements and technological skill.

The first task of a national educational policy in the sphere of collegiate and university education will be to improve standards, that is, to improve the quality of education. Higher education in India suffers from low standards. Some of the causes leading to low standards have been discussed by a Committee of the University Grants Commission, New Delhi. In a comprehensive report published in 1965, they have indicated a few necessary steps to correct the deficiencies. These have been discussed in Chapter XIX of this book. The small percentage of educated Indians is an argument for the rapid expansion of education as well as equalisation of educational opportunities at all levels ; but this expansion



would not be worthwhile if the products of our schools and colleges turn out to be of sub-standard quality. It should be the purpose of a national educational policy to strike a balance between the needs for expansion of educational opportunities on the one hand and the consolidation of the progress already achieved through the improvement of the quality of such progress, on the other.

Regional imbalances apart, there appears to be, on the basis of the available figures of total student enrolment in the affiliated colleges, far too many colleges to be efficiently managed. The U.G.C. thinks that 800-1000 students should be about the optimum enrolment of a College from the point of view of maintaining adequate teaching standards and discipline. In 1963-64, the total student enrolment in the affiliated colleges was 10,13,032. On the basis of an average enrolment of 1000 for a College, the total number of colleges should be, say, 1000 in all India. Actually there were 2,111 colleges in 1963-64. In other words, there were more than double the number of colleges permissible under the U.G.C. specifications. A U.G.C. survey carried out in the same year also showed that there were nearly 300 colleges with an enrolment of less than 100 students each and more than 700 colleges with an enrolment of 100-300 students each. Even if we exclude the new or special type Colleges in which enrolment would naturally be small, or consider the need for providing facilities of higher education in backward or relatively inaccessible areas where a large student enrolment cannot be expected in the near future, it can be stated that many of the 2,111 colleges are neither viable units nor able to maintain even the minimum academic standards. Naturally, the question of further expansion in the number of colleges has to be carefully considered on merits. The College Committee of the U.G.C., set up in 1962, recommended that "no college should be granted affiliation by a University unless the basic requirements relating to staff, library and laboratories etc., are provided at the very outset." At present, affiliation is rather freely granted, sometimes due to political or local pressure and often on mere promises to fulfil the necessary requirements.

As regards Universities, the U.G.C., while pointing out that it costs less to expand facilities in the existing universities than to set up new universities, observes that "the establishment of a new University can be considered only in terms of the contribution it is likely



to make to raise the quality and standards of education, and in relation to the availability of competent teachers and adequate financial resources". The Committee on *Standards of University Education* (1965) would like the Central Government to exercise "a strict control" on the establishment of new universities by the State Governments. These salutary views, however, will remain mere *ipse dixits* unless the State Governments which have the power to sanction new universities fall in line. This applies also to the establishment of new colleges, though in the sphere of collegiate education, both the University and the State Government have a sort of joint responsibility. The Government of West Bengal have lately been sponsoring a chain of colleges known as "Sponsored" Colleges on a deficit-grant basis. Some of the big Colleges in West Bengal which have come under the U.G.C. scheme of phased reduction of roll-strength are also in receipt of substantial grants to make up for the resultant deficit. In the case of the "sponsored" colleges, however, there is further control in so far as all appointments to teaching posts in these colleges have to be made out of a "panel" of candidates approved by the West Bengal Government. The Universities, of course, retain their powers of affiliation and disaffiliation which, applied to the sponsored colleges, remain more or less nominal. These are some of the reasons why the caution advised by the University Grants Commission is not likely to be very effective unless the relevant State authorities equally recognise its propriety. The Union Government, in such cases, can play only a limited role.

The question, therefore, remains : how can a *national* policy emerge out of a possible conflict of jurisdictions ? Reference has been made to the need for working through a consensus ; also to making Education a "concurrent" subject. The former is an excellent device for much can be achieved through a tactful approach and friendly discussion. The aim should always be to widen, rather than limit, the scope of such discussions. There are many highly competent organisations at the Centre to give expert, impartial advice. There also exists a regular machinery of consultation with the educational authorities of the States at all effective levels. The ultimate responsibility for a decision will, of course, lie with the States. The other solution, making Education a concurrent subject



with primacy of Central legislation is, for similar reasons, still more difficult to achieve. Education Ministers in many of the States have fought shy of accepting the proposal of making Education a concurrent subject. In any case, the Government of India have announced its decision against making Education a concurrent subject. By and large, the consensus method remains the only way to secure agreement on a national educational programme. I have no doubt that the formulators of such a programme will have to do a little bit of tight-rope walking, as federal governments everywhere do in greater or less degree, to reconcile national sovereignty with State rights ; but there is no reason to question why if the proposed programme is formulated on a rational basis, with no political overtones, and takes full cognisance of State policies,a happy compromise should not be possible. Difficulties, if any, need not be put into cold storage in a spirit of escapism. They are meant to be faced and solved ; that is to say, there should be continuous efforts even if it takes time for the efforts to be successful.

Taking all things into consideration, a national educational programme in relation to Collegiate or University education cannot take a rigid stand on the question of the starting of new colleges or universities. Normally, the views expressed by the College Committee of 1962 or the Standards Committee of 1965 are unexceptionable. But there is such a thing as regional imbalance which requires correction. It is a well-known fact that, in the past, schools and colleges were established in a haphazard manner. The British Government in India had been generally content with establishing one zilla school in each district of a Province, and a handful of colleges to serve as " model " institutions. It was very early during their regime that the authorities of the East India Company decided to withdraw from the policy of direct support to educational institutions. The result was that the field was left open almost entirely to private effort ; whether a particular area got a school or college depended on the accident of a patron of learning, or, say, a missionary society, coming forward to fill up the vacuum. As a result, there are yet large regional gaps where students passing out of the local schools are put to difficulty and expense to find a College where they could satisfy their desire for higher education without too great a strain on their purse.



There are two ways of solving such difficulties. One is to allow new Colleges to be started only in what may be called deficit areas. If the enrolment is not large enough to maintain a College at a reasonable level of efficiency (as required under University regulations) it should be given appropriate State assistance as long as it is in deficit ; or, where the situation is desperate, to disestablish the college and arrange for the transfer of its students, by providing for low-cost hostel accommodation, to the colleges that are nearest to the area, so as to absorb these students. At present, the hostel charges, even at a moderate level, are too prohibitive for students coming of poor families in the rural areas. In 1963-64, only 17.4 per cent of the total student enrolment of the affiliated colleges in India were in residence. A Committee appointed by the U.G.C. in March, 1964, of which this author was a member, considered the question of increased hostel accommodation for students and teachers and recommended that the local authorities and State governments might be persuaded to grant exemption of ground rents and reduce rates and taxes on the hostels which would ultimately help to reduce the hostel fees charged from the students. The Committee also recommended that the schedule of hostel fees should be adjusted in a way so as to provide rent-free accommodation to about 5 to 10 per cent of the students living in the hostels who should be selected on the basis of merit ; also that efforts should be made to provide hostel accommodation to about 75 per cent of the students in institutions of all-India character and that the possibility of granting financial assistance so as to cover all their expenses should be explored.³ The author is not aware of any concrete steps having been taken so far to implement these recommendations. The only course left, therefore, is to permit the starting of colleges where it is necessary to correct regional imbalances, especially if local patrons of learning care to put up the capital costs by way of land, buildings, furniture

³ The Committee calculated that if the existing proportion of students in residence were to be raised from 17 to 25 per cent during the Third Plan period and maintained at that level during the Fourth Plan period it would require an outlay of Rs. 120 crores. The cost being regarded as rather high, it was recommended that "we must endeavour at least to maintain the present proportion of students provided with hostel accommodation and, if possible, try to increase it in the years to come". (Report, para 6).

and fittings as well as other equipment. The State Government should, of course, agree to bear the full deficit in operational costs, at least for a specified period of time.

It will be better if the State educational authorities prepare a blue-print of such regional imbalances and embark on a plan of correcting the same. The Union Government through the U.G.C. and the local Universities concerned should provide sufficient funds to assist the expansion of facilities for higher education throughout the country, provided that such expansion is justified but cannot be undertaken for want of funds. This should be in addition to the increased allocation that a National Plan might be expected to provide for the consolidation and improvement of the existing facilities for higher studies and research. In India where private endowments on a generous scale are not yet available for financing of research, the State has to step in. Some of the measures that may be considered necessary for this purpose are suggested below :

(1) The National Policy on Education should categorically commit the Government of India to the allocation of sufficient funds for the promotion of advanced study and research. The facilities available at the existing Research Institutes or Laboratories should be re-examined with a view to their fuller utilisation.

(2) Teachers of affiliated colleges should have their teaching load reduced to enable them to engage in significant research. I should suggest that no teacher taking Honours classes and/or engaged in research should be given a teaching load in excess of 12 hours a week. Where necessary, they should be given research grants for approved schemes.

(3) College laboratories should be properly equipped with the necessary apparatus required for research for which adequate funds and facilities should be made available.

(4) All Universities should be enabled to draw upon a specially created Central Fund (which may be operated by the U.G.C.) up to a stated limit for financing of approved research.

(5) The Centres of Advanced Study and Research set up by the U.G.C. should be further expanded and multiplied. A fruitful area of expansion lies in Indian linguistics and the further development of the modern Indian languages. Another field will be that of tribal



education and research. Other specialised fields relate to electronics, petro-chemicals, dietetics, military science etc.

(6) In India, we have very good practising lawyers, but very few jurists; very good doctors but few devoted to medical research, very good engineers but very few engaged in research in engineering science. The Universities owe it to themselves to open faculties for such research and recruit competent staff for the purpose.

(7) Similarly urgent attention needs be paid to the development of such fields as those of nuclear research, research in optics, glass and ceramics, river-training, metallurgy and other sciences requiring the application of advanced and highly sophisticated techniques. All these require substantial investments which could be made available only by the Centre.

(8) The respective Faculties of the Universities should be strengthened by inviting distinguished foreign scholars and professors to work as special or visiting Professors and Readers on contract appointments, the pay and other emoluments being fixed by mutual agreement. The necessary foreign exchange should be provided by the Government.

(9) Finally, there is the question of a National University. If a National Policy on Education is to be implemented, the question whether there should be a National University for All-India should be considered on a high priority basis, without bias or prejudice.

I have serious misgivings about the propriety of recognising some of the existing Universities of India as "major Universities." I need not repeat the grounds of my objection. The main objection is that it bids fair to introduce a class-system among the Universities, among the teachers of the Universities as well as among the students. This idea, in my view, should be given up. Instead, there should be a National University *at the Centre* with colleges affiliated to it and distributed all over India so that each State has at least one such college affiliated to the National University. The medium of instruction should be English, but all the State languages should be taught at the Honours level, and there should be common syllabi in the different subjects to be followed in all its constituent colleges. There need be no competition between these Colleges and those affiliated to the regional Universities because they would operate at different levels. The student bodies of the colleges



affiliated to the National University should naturally be cosmopolitan in character. There should be a large number of free places for meritorious students ; the teacher-student ratio should preferably be 1 to 10 ; and the standard of teaching should not be inferior to the best that is available in the leading universities of the East and the West. It would, in fact, be a more powerful and effective force for national integration than the scheme of Major Universities proposed by the Education Commission. Finally, as an adjunct to the National University there should be a National Bureau of Translation to organise and undertake the translation of standard foreign works into the regional languages including the preparation of standard lexicons as well as arrange for the reprinting in India of standard text-books so as to make them available at subsidised rates to students as well as teachers.

VI

The Student Problem

This is the most intractable, the most baffling, of the problems that have erupted into the Indian educational scene. The question has already been discussed in detail in Chapter XXIII. Today, the problem looks like a cancerous growth. It is deadly, for it affects the vital processes of the educational system. Its aetiology is not yet fully known ; it has not yet yielded to treatment because its remedy—a long-time solution—has not yet been found.

All that we can state now is that the disease, its symptoms, some of the predisposing causes, the factors that aggravate it, are now better understood. After all, the disease is of comparatively recent growth. It is, by and large, a post-World-War-II phenomenon. Naturally the causes lie deep in the new social, economic and political forces that have shaken the post-war world releasing strong currents of a revolutionary character as a reaction against the social, moral and economic devastations caused by the War. Youth is naturally intolerant of iniquity and injustice. Indian youth is no exception. This attitude of protest is often mistaken by the older generation as a form of incipient indiscipline. This generation, one suspects, fails to understand that a clash of values is, by itself, no indiscipline. On



the other hand, it is a healthy process inherent in a democratic society in which values are opposed by values to get at a new synthesis. That is why our young people very often talk in terms of dialectics. It is only when they decide to supersede reason and think that violence is the only way in which truth can be established that the problem of student indiscipline arises. It is basically a case of indiscipline of mind, of reason : or using wrong means for right ends. It is no less condemnable even if the right means are used—but for wrong ends. In other words, it is not merely the goal, but the means to attain the goal, that is equally at issue. It is the behaviour-pattern of a section of the students with an uncontrollable taste for violence and rowdyism, towards indecency in speech and behaviour and the resultant inhibition of reason, that spells danger to a young but democratic nation.

It is up to the educational authorities to make an effort to understand the basic factors in our own national life that lead to, or accentuate, indisciplined conduct on the part of our students. It is not true that all students who are guilty of violent conduct are Marxists, or to adopt a more common term, Leftists. Some of them are at any rate ideationally motivated. Many of them are, indeed, too far gone to be turned back to the paths of sweet reasonableness and correct behaviour. All that society can do is to render this latter class innocuous. That, of course, would be a difficult task, to confront them by an unbending will, because this group, inspired by a fanatic zeal, is also well-organized and resourceful. In so far as they indulge in a sort of propaganda war—of a type in which they are adepts—in attempts at indoctrination of their prospective fellow-travellers, these can be met by an equally widespread and persistent counter-propaganda and a healthy educational system. If, however, they use the weapons of force, society must use the supreme force it has in hand, the force of collective will.

In any case, this group, though a determined lot, is as yet relatively ineffective in India. Also, paradoxically, as this group is well-organized, it should be easier to deal with it. But there is a large mass of credulous and gullible students who fall in line with this group with no clear-cut philosophy behind their action except a vague sense of grievances some of which may, indeed, be quite petty but which they are prevailed upon to magnify in order to justify the extreme

steps they are persuaded to take in defiance of authority. Their leaders work frequently under the cloak of anonymity and are, not always easy to identify. It is necessary in such cases to locate the grievances, the issues, petty or other, and to try to remove them before the pot of discontent boils over. Student bodies in the colleges may, in fact, be encouraged to set up a branch of their organisation to define these grievances, and to follow the constitutional channels of securing redress. The decision of the authorities in such cases should be final but should be announced after the fullest consideration is given to the students' representations. Justice should not only be done but be *seen* to be done. The finality of decision would, I daresay, be accepted with good grace by the uncommitted section of the students which, the author feels sure, they would do if they felt that the machinery of settlement would work in a fair and impartial manner. Authority, on its part, should be firm, yet sympathetic, in dealing with students' grievances. Prompt and anticipatory action should be taken at the first signs of trouble.

These, however, relate to causes of organised indiscipline in particular institutions. So far as the national educational programme is concerned, it is more concerned with the general deficiencies of the educational system as a whole, such as its aimlessness, its lack of responsiveness to the needs of a modern age, its unreality in the context of an intensified struggle for survival. Here it is that the national educational policy will find its greatest challenge, for the problems cover the entire field of education. The immediate task is to bring about a complete re-orientation of the aims and objectives of education in our country so as to invest it with a social purpose and direct it towards the fulfilment of carefully formulated national objectives. Above all, it must have a distinct job-value. India has, in this respect, a great advantage at the start in that it has already adopted the goal of democratic socialism. Our policy-framers should do well to bear this in mind if they are to get the support and loyalty of the younger generation. It should not be difficult to impress on the general body of students that this goal of democratic socialism and of a Welfare State are India's choice in clear preference to systems that thrive on war, violence and bloodshed to achieve aims which are inconsistent with the free spirit of man.



The immediate problem, so far as student indiscipline is concerned, is posed by the student wings of the political parties. The problem is not that these students allow themselves to be tied to the apron strings of political parties. The problem is, why they should do so. I feel that many of the hot-heads are involved in so-called political activities because of a false sense of glamour. In fact, newspapers very often play their game by glamourising their activities with lurid headlines, pictures, comments. They organise vociferous "deputations", they hold University dons at their mercy, they strike terror into the hearts of those who do not toe their path, by a show or threat of brute strength ; and all this gives them a taste of "power" for which a certain kind of neurosis makes them crazy. Their methods are not only defiant, but sociologically speaking, deviant. They are, indeed, pathological cases ; but since they act in large numbers, they cannot be brought over to the couch of a psychiatrist.

How to deal with them ? There is a growing school of thought which views student indiscipline as a purely political problem, one for the politicians to solve. One way, frequently advocated, is to secure an understanding among the leaders of the major political parties in India not to make use of students for their agitational programmes, and not to encourage students to leave their classes on issues that may better be left to their leaders. What, for instance, has politics to do with the teaching of Mathematics is anybody's guess. And why should a procession go out exactly when a class in economics is going to be held and not in the evenings, or on holidays, when a procession or two would not disturb their normal studies or when their shouts in the campus will not drown the voice of the professor in the class room ? Is it because they would not otherwise get a sufficient number of followers to make an impressive show, or is it because the cinema shows and football matches are held in the afternoons ? The main difficulty is that none of the political parties would agree to pass a self-denying ordinance by withdrawing students from politics. Still, a national policy statement would do well to repeat the appeal to the political leadership of the country at least to discourage, if not to clearly dissociate themselves from, the type of demonstrations or other agitational programmes that are likely to cause serious disruption of their studies.



What the author would suggest, further, is that the politically conscious elements of the student body be provided with legitimate opportunities for the exercise of power that could be usefully delegated to them within the limits of their academic commitments. An experiment with "Student Government" for which some of the American colleges and universities offer interesting prototypes may be tried. A more effective use of the proctorial prototype may also offer an outlet for the energies of students with qualities of leadership. The technique is that of saddling these students with delegated power *plus* corresponding responsibility. Faculty-student collaboration may also be organised to deal with all cases of student indiscipline. It would be a good idea to make it a condition that all members of the executive of the Students' Union must be students of good academic standing. For all kinds of approved student activities, proper opportunities, as well as amenities are to be provided by the respective college and University authorities. At present the room allotted for the office of the Students' Union in most of the Colleges is often a very small one, almost like a den, and used as such. Extra-curricular activities also tend to follow a stereotyped pattern and show little diversity. Imaginative programmes with an entertainment value (but at the same time instructive) should be taken up under the leadership and guidance of Faculty members. Such activities may be so devised as to fully occupy the idle hours of the students and to which they should feel naturally attracted. If properly managed, all this may, to a great extent, prevent student involvement in political activity that takes them out to the streets, or in rowdy and disorderly conduct instigated by interested political factions.

Serious thought is to be given to the long-term consequences of the immunity at present enjoyed by students from so-called police action as a matter of convention. It is time that this immunity is substituted by the doctrine of responsibility. There should be a well-defined code of conduct for students enunciated at the highest level. No immunity should normally extend to any violation of this code. No doubt students are by nature emotional, impulsive, easily excitable. The fullest consideration should be given to these aspects of their character. It must be understood that they are, as a rule, actuated by what they consider to be a noble purpose or a high ideal. But does it mean that they claim an inherent right to



be irresponsible ? Do they want to involve themselves with those that loot shops, commit acts of arson, and indulge in other patently criminal acts as part of the game ? If not, then the law must be allowed to take its course, with full power to the police to deal with any situation that is likely to lead to such criminal acts. Of course it shall be incumbent on the police as well as the magistracy to appreciate the line that divides an act of student indiscretion from the commission of a culpable offence by a "rowdy". It must, however, be understood that the main deterrent to student misbehaviour is not the arm of the law but the love, affection and understanding that provide the golden link between the teachers and the taught in the temples of learning.

Educationists, politicians, social workers, leaders of thought, the press—all well-wishers of the student community—should join together in creating a climate of opinion against the frequent recurrence of acts of indiscipline. Last but not least, the guardians must come forward and exercise their own natural influence over their wards to make them feel that it is unprofitable to deviate from the legitimate activities becoming of a student. It is possible that some of them may not have that influence over their wards which is normally expected in the case of parent-child relations, but a good many who have sunk their hard-earned money in their ward's education will not like to see their money going down the drain, in a spirit of passivity or resignation. A teacher-parent-child relation is the natural axis round which the educational system revolves. This relationship should be strengthened by all means at the disposal of the educational institutions or even higher agencies so that there may be a strong foundation for the authority, personal and institutional, to be exercised over the students at all levels.

One charge against our educational system is that it is a-moral. There is substance in the charge. This, one is afraid, is due to a misunderstanding of the secular nature of our State. The author believes there is an urgency for putting into effect the recommendations of the Sri Prakasa Committee on Moral and Religious Education as far as possible. The University Education Commission, 1948, has also spoken in a similar vein. Our children are now growing up in an atmosphere of disbelief. The result has been a crisis of spirit that dulls their moral sense. The universal truths that all the major religions preach,



the high example of the great religious teachers of the world, a little more of self-analysis and a little less of ostentation, may yet succeed in lighting up the path of our students towards a better life and self-realisation.

VII

University Autonomy

This is a matter on which the academic world is understandably very sensitive. It was repeatedly a point at issue when India was under British Rule. Now the context has changed. India, of her free will, has chosen her own path of development, to build a socialist society. This is to be achieved not through a totalitarian administrative complex but through the processes of democratic socialism. The Government, with the support of a freely elected legislature, has assumed large powers of control, direction and intervention in the affairs of the country. This has meant that the newly acquired freedom has been invested with a social purpose to which individual and sectional interests must yield.

It is, therefore, not to be expected that the State would keep its hands off such an important and vital field of national activity as Education. The official world now extends its influence and control over Universities in three different ways. One is the device of nomination *plus* official representation in University bodies. A second device is the power of approval reserved to the Government in regard to appointments etc. A third one is financial control exercised by the Government through grants for general as well as specific purposes which are subject to sanction and subsequent audit. None of these devices of influence and control can, in general terms, be taken exception to. Objection is raised when State power is used, or is suspected to be used, not for the advancement of the interests of education, of learning and research, but for political or party purposes, or to block free discussion with the help of a solid phalanx of Government nominees. It is not incorrect to state that these latter do not enjoy the freedom to vote when they take part in the discussion of controversial issues. Sometimes voting takes place on party-lines and the genuine educationist is rendered impotent or ineffective. It is to rescue the universities from the corroding



influence of party politics that the question of University autonomy has become a current issue.

If this conclusion, which still needs to be spelt out in concrete terms, is to be conceded, it must also be conceded that the concept of autonomy is not a one-way idea, and that a university which costs a lot of public money, must *deserve* its autonomy. It would appear a *cliche* to say that there are universities and universities. The ugly disclosures made about certain universities in India in recent times reveal them to be hot-beds of nepotism, corruption, clique-ism and indiscipline. Even caste-ism and a perverse kind of regionalism have vitiated the cosmopolitan character of University life. If the controlling authorities of the universities—the Court or the Senate, the Syndicate (or the Executive Council), the Academic Council and other University bodies—themselves are demonstrably involved in the racket, or are otherwise powerless to stop the rot, the Government cannot presumably watch this deterioration in the manner of disinterested spectators saying, "it is none of our business". It is the tax-payer's money which keeps the wheels of a university moving, and the Government is the custodian—in a manner, the trustee—of that money. But it must act as an ultimate force. This is another way of saying that no statutory University has the autonomy—or freedom—to sign its own death-warrant ; for if the Government is persuaded—we may even say, forced—to assume control (by 'control' is meant effective control in whatever form it is exercised) over a university, that university academically ceases to exist.

This is the dilemma confronting the concept of University autonomy. There is no doubt that the State cannot divest itself of the legal responsibility for the public education of its citizens. But in democratic countries, the State usually works through specialised agencies to which powers are delegated. In the U.S.A., the "accreditation" of institutions (with liberal arts and general programmes) is done by a number of regional accrediting associations. Besides these, professional schools are accredited by professional bodies or associations. The U.S. Government, as such, is not directly concerned with this business of accreditation. Its own functions are also exercised through a number of special agencies including its Office of Education. The Universities, of course, have their own



set-up. In India, the Government, both State and Central, would do well to withdraw from direct control and management of educational institutions. We suggest :

- (1) The State Boards of Secondary Education should have adequate and autonomous powers. Official representation should be strictly limited. Only persons with a distinguished educational background or experience or professional status should come in as Government nominees.
- (2) Recognition (accreditation) of schools should be done by the State Board which should have the authority to employ a qualified inspecting staff as well as advisers. Recognition may be withdrawn from institutions showing poor performance for 5 consecutive years (after warnings at the end of the third and fourth years).
- (3) Grants-in-aid should be made by the Government on the advice of the Board which will be tendered on the basis of reports received from the officers. The State Government should retain the power of final audit, a copy of the audit report being sent to the Board as well as to the institution concerned.
- (4) So far as colleges are concerned, the power of affiliation and disaffiliation should be exercised exclusively by the affiliating University concerned. Affiliation in a particular subject or subjects may be withdrawn in case of a persistently poor record of performance in the subject or subjects by the students concerned for 5 consecutive years. The inspecting staff of the University should be strengthened so that each College is inspected at least once a year. Affiliation is to be withdrawn if a college fails to comply with the conditions of affiliation within a period specified by the University, or becomes an unmitigated hotbed of factionalism, intrigues, persistent indiscipline and corruption. This should be done only after a proper enquiry, with a right of appeal. It would be a good idea to set up a joint machinery of reference whose advice would be freely available to the authorities of a college in dealing with difficult or emergent situations. The Vice-Chancellor or the Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the University should be the chairman of this body ;



other members may include the Inspector of Colleges, a Government nominee, one or two nominees of the Principals and a similar number of teachers' representatives, with the Registrar of the University as the Secretary.

- (5) Just as all Central grants to Universities are routed through the University Grants Commission, all State grants should be channelled through a State Grants Committee consisting of senior educationists and a financial adviser. The Committee should have its own staff and operate its own budget. Apart from acting as the channel of Government grants, the Committee should be placed in charge of sufficient funds for financing approved schemes of educational research and development. The U.G.C. grants may also be routed through the State Grants Committees. Government should have the right of final audit a copy of which should be sent to the Grants Committee as well as to the Universities concerned.
- (6) The Governor of a State need not be the *ex-officio* Chancellor of the University. This high office should be open to a distinguished citizen of India who should be a scholar in his own right. The Syndicate should elect him.
- (7) The Vice-Chancellor should also be elected by the Syndicate. He should have a high scholastic background and be a man of all-India reputation, with wide experience as an educationist ; or should have held the rank of a University Professor with at least 10 years' experience.
- (8) All teachers should be appointed by the Syndicate on the recommendation of a University Services Commission assisted by one or more experts, where necessary. The Syndicate should have the power of referring back to the Commission its recommendations in any specific case or cases for reconsideration. In no case should the Government have a say, far less a vote, with regard to the appointment of any category of teachers, except on financial or legal grounds. This procedure need not be applicable in case the Syndicate decides to invite an acknowledged foreign expert or specialist for holding a chair or for special courses of lectures. Such appointments may be on a contract basis. The pay and emoluments in such cases may be fixed by negotiation.

- (9) Consideration should be given to the question whether Government Colleges should continue as such, or whether the present distinction between Government, Sponsored and private colleges should give way to a uniform Collegiate system.

These proposals are evidently not exhaustive nor are they intended to be so. They are indicative of the application of the principle of autonomy in certain general and specific areas. These may, as far as possible, be extended. What is essential is an understanding that education can flourish best in an atmosphere of free air. The more shackles are put on the human spirit, the easier will be the path towards a totalitarian regime.

VIII

Education and Employment

The problem of unemployment among educated classes is a problem of great national concern. The first need is to get a correct measure of the problem. Unfortunately, the country's Employment Exchanges cannot be relied upon, except in a general way, for an assessment of the actual size of the problem. Ways will have to be found to collect dependable data bearing on the unemployment of the educated classes, from matriculates upwards.

Certain figures presented by the Education Commission (1964-66) have been referred to in this connection in a previous chapter. The figures are based on the papers prepared for the Commission by the Planning Unit of the Indian Statistical Institute jointly with the Unit for Economic and Statistical Studies on Higher Education of the London School of Economics and Political Science in collaboration with the Perspective Planning Division of the Indian Planning Commission. These figures invite a further brief reference. The year of reference is 1961. Perspectives are also worked out for 1976 and 1986.* A more detailed reference is to be found in chapter XVII of this book.

* Education Commission Report, Table 5.2 and 5.3

Category	ESTIMATES (in thousands)		
	1961	1976	1986
Matriculation and above			
Total stock	..	8,227	27,339
No. of workers	..	5,164	16,612
Graduates and above			
Total stock	..	1,510	4,433
No. of workers	..	1,146	3,299
			6,543

(Source : I.S.I./L.S.E. Papers ; Census, 1961 ; N. S. Survey, 16th round.)

It will be seen from the above figures that in 1961, there were a little over 3 million matriculates and above who were non-workers. Graduate non-workers exceeded 360,000. In 1976, the figures of non-workers would, according to the estimates, increase to 11 million in the case of matriculates and above and 1.1 million in the case of graduates and above. In 1986, the figures would be respectively 24 million and 2.5 million. During this period (1961-1986) the total out-turn of matriculates and above would have increased from 0.6 million to 4.8 million, and of graduates (and above) from 0.12 million to 0.77 million. The non-workers are, however, not all "unemployed" in the technical sense. Many of them would be students ; others housewives. Even allowing for these, the number of unemployed non-workers would be uncomfortably large to sleep over. At any rate, our efforts have not been convincing enough. The problem is, of course, not easy to solve. Nor can it be evaded any longer, for a major socio-economic break-down is impending.

One way of dealing with the problem is to link education to productivity. This has found favour with the Education Commission and most of our educational planners. It has meant that our educational system should be so devised as to enable every one completing his education to find gainful employment which, of course, does not necessarily mean salaried employment. It is relevant to notice in this connection that in 1961 workers who were matriculates and above formed only 2.7 per cent of the total number of workers. In 1986, the percentage is estimated to be 11. During this period, the total enrolment in education would be quadrupled. "It may be pointed out," says the Education Commission, "that even this projected achievement is much below the level already reached in

the industrialised countries." The Commission, faced with these figures, proposes :⁵

- (i) to restrict the unplanned and uncontrolled expansion of general education and higher education, if massive educated unemployment is to be avoided ;
- (ii) to make special and intensive efforts to vocationalise secondary education and to develop professional education at the University stage ; and
- (iii) to devise suitable machinery, at both the national and state levels, which will relate the estimates of manpower needs effectively to the output of the educational system so that, by and large, there is some assurance that a suitably trained person would be available for every type of job to be done and every educated person would find a job appropriate to his educational and professional training.

The Commission is careful to add that the word "restriction" as applied to the lower stages of education does not involve selection on the ground of 'fitness.' For instance, at the lower secondary stage which is to be regarded as completion of general education, selection "should be oriented more towards 'testing and guidance' than towards 'elimination'. Its main objective (the Commission explains) should be to enable a student to know his own level of achievement and his potentialities and to decide whether it would be in his interest to leave the school and enter the world of work, or to join a particular vocational course, or to continue in the stream of general education. The Committee on *Standards of University of Education* (U.G.C.) also expresses the view that in this country, "Education in general Arts and Science subjects is being given to far too many students." It would be necessary, the Committee points out, "to pay particular attention to, and expand, those sectors of education which are of more direct value to the development programme of the country". But these are long-term remedies. It should be the business of the State to devise immediate measures for tackling with the problem right now. Our Fourth Plan must be made, to the maximum extent possible, labour intensive.

⁵ *Op. cit.*, p. 97

*The Remedy—and the Hope*

There is no doubt that these views and the steps recommended by the Education Commission will be widely debated. But there is another factor on which our capacity of solving so many of our national problems, including the problem of mass unemployment ultimately depends. This is the problem of our population growth, a problem that has been kept out of the scope of the present enquiry. But there are those who would hold that unless the uninhibited growth of population is checked, all efforts to revive the economy would be swamped, and that the outlay on education would be largely wasted. This is the basic problem underlying all our efforts to create a new image of India. But what is the remedy? —Stop every Indian to reproduce too many of his species, that the rest may thrive? Was it Jawaharlal Nehru who, several years ago, said that India's population should be half of what it is? Because there is no work for the other half? Well, more than a decade has passed since then and we are worse than ever before, looking for jobs, looking for food, looking for shelter—looking for a Messiah! There is hardly any hope, it seems, unless medical science succeeds in discovering a Killer of human sperm that is at once cheap, effective and easy to engage. That, it is believed, would be the way to save the World and India, for both are suffering from a surfeit of babies whose needs we cannot meet. It is true that the other side of the picture—that to deaden a human sperm may result in killing a future genius—has not troubled human conscience because we are thinking in terms of the millions who would otherwise be jobless, for whom we would not be able to provide either education or other necessities, not to speak of the decencies, of life. But has it ever occurred that education—of the right type—still provides a better alternative to a policy of extinguishing a spark of life, however, insignificant it might appear to be in the face of the millions who are today dying of hunger and malnutrition? By education I mean dissemination of knowledge and wisdom, which, while retaining its fundamental humanistic basis, will effectively meet the challenge of a scientific and technological age. It will produce work and the means to satisfy hunger and create a higher plane of life. It is in vain that



the Poet, troubled by his very human conscience, the philosopher who sings the song of the soul, gets the better of the biologist or the educator, and bursts forth :

*A million million spermatozoa
All of them alive :
Out of their cataclysm but one poor Noah
Dare hope to survive.*

*And among that billion minus one
Might have chanced to be
Shakespeare, another Newton, a new Donne—
But the One Was Me.*

(—ALDOUS HUXLEY)

But, then, let us hope that that One—no, Not Me, but, may be, some other fellow who would be a representative of his Age and whose footsteps may now be echoing in the corridors of the Future—an invisible dot in the symbolic Red Triangle —would be more than a match for Shakespeare, Newton, Donne or the rest of them. He will bring Work, he will bring Food, he will bring Hope,—the message of survival to India's millions that are and that are to be: He will be India's New Generation.

ALPHABETICAL INDEX

[References are to page numbers ; 'n' denotes foot-note]

A

- Aachan, Charlemagne's Court School at, 649.
 Abbot-Wood Report, 358, 359, 371
 Academic freedom for teachers, 499, 500
 Academic life, pathology of, 778
 Accrediting agencies (U.S.A.), 309
 Achievement tests and course objectives, 676
 Act of Incorporation (1857)—see under "Universities in India."
 Adam, William, 19, 210, 262, 263, 352, 429, 431, 433
 Addy, Gour Mohun, 136, 207
 Admission tests (in ancient India), 64
 Admission to Universities, 629
 Adult age, 583, 583n
 Adult education, 19n, 25, 574-604 ; agencies of, 578-81 ; aim of, 601 ; and material aids, 585 ; and non-official effort, 580, 585, 597 ; and role of educational institutions, 580 ; and role of Government, 580 ; an essential base of national educational policy, 827 ; a total governmental function, 579 : -Committee, West Bengal (1948), 594 ; cost of, 583 ; course contents, 592 ; impediments to, 582-86 ; mass approach to, 593 ; methods and areas of operation, 585 ; National Board of, 579, 585 ; National Seminar on (1965), 579 ; non-official bodies for, 585 ; problems of (Report from Indonesia), 582 ; programme for West Bengal (1948), 594ff ; selective approach to, 593 ; Seminar on, in Asia, 582 ; three-fold object of, 593
 Adult illiteracy, National Board of, 579 ; and U.S.S.R., 589-592
 Adult learning, 586-589 ; syllabus for, 593, 596, 598-600
 Advanced Centres of Study, 440, 495, 821
 Afro-Asian Powers, 796
 Age-distribution, in formal education, 586
 Age-grouping, India, 397, 398 ; U.S.A., 307 ; U.S.S.R., 311.
 Agharkar, S. P., 232
 Agra College, 207
 Agricultural—education, apathy for, 542 ; Personnel Committee, 26 ; occupations, aversion for, 541 ; Universities, 542
 Aims of University education, 459-62
 Aiyer, C. P. Ramaswamy, 63n
 Akbar (Emperor), 724
 Albert College (Calcutta), 438
 Aligarh (Muslim) University, 513, 516

- All-India Council of Technical Education, 532, 534, 558, 566 ; Regional Committees of, 534
 All-India Educational Service, 821
 American Land-Grant Colleges, 499
Ananda, 63, 64
 Anderson, J. E., 409
 Andhra University, 513
 Anglicised class, 727
 Anglicists, 727 ; conflict with Orientalists, 20, 31-32, 97, 129, 209, 210, 430.
 Anglo-Indian Community, 725
 "Angrezi Hatao," 732
 Angry generation, 107
 Angry young men, 769, 804-06
 Annamalai University, 513
 Answer-papers, assessment of, 685-87 ; variations in marking, 682-84.
 Answers, grading of, 695-97
 Anthony, Frank, 723, 724n
Apara Vidya, 61, 62
 Apprenticeship Act (1961), 531, 543
 Apprenticeship Training, Board of (see Board of Apprenticeship Training), 304, 530, 543 ; R. N. Mookerjee Committee (1920) on, 530.
 A Programme in Perspective, 825-860.
 Arabic, Study of, 210, 352
 Aristotle, 808, 822
 Arnold, Matthew, 77
 Arpooly Pathsala, 207
 Artisan training centre, 534
 Ashby, Eric, 57
Ashtha-yoganga, 62
 Asiatic Society, 431
 Assessment Committee on Basic Education, 196, 283, 287
 Associate language, 707
 Asutosh College (Calcutta), 487
 Asutosh-Gokhale controversy, 132-33
 Asutosh-Lytton controversy, 242-44
 Asutosh Mookerjee (see Mookerjee, Asutosh).
 August Revolution (1942), 589
 Auckland (Lord), 433, 438
 Automation, 571, 572
 Average score, 699
Avidya, 61
Ayurveda, 62
 Azad, Abul Kalam, 204

B

- Babelisation of India, 733
 Bahadur Khan, 210
 Banaras (Hindu) University, 513, 516
 Banbury Grammar School, 649

- Banerjea, Benoyendranath, 582, 583 ; Surendranath, 206, 230.
- Banerjee, Gooroodas, 153, 208, 225, 226, 234, 444, 446 ; Sambhu Nath, 743 ; Sri Kumar, 743
- Baretto, Joseph, 102
- Baroda University, 513, 517
- Basic education, 25, 160, 293, 303, 304
- Basic education scheme, 397
- Basic (National) Education, Assessment Committee on, 196, 283, 287 ; a critique, 281-85 ; Committee (1937), 278 ; and Education Commissions, 285-88 ; and teachers, 285 ; concept of, 279-81, 293 ; coherence with general stream of education, 276, 283 ; its self-supporting nature, 182-85 ; main defect of, 568 ; method of its development, 283-284 ; philosophy of, 278, 279
- Basic schools, 287, 288, 375-76
- Basu, Anathnath, 367, 743 ; Bhupendranath, 237 ; Jadunath, 94, 217 ; J. (Jogiraj), 70n.
- Bauls, 84
- Berhampore College, (West Bengal), 443
- Bengal Engineering College, 531, 532
- Bengal, Partition of, 17, 39, 448
- Bengal Technical Institute, 153
- Bentinck, William, 208n
- Bhagavad Gita*, 59
- Bhandarkar, D. R., 232
- Bhattacharyya, Chapalakanta, 747 ; Charuchandra, 110 ; Nirmalchandra, 783
- Bhave, Vinoba, 182, 184
- Bhawani, Rani, 20
- Bible, The, 123
- Bilgrami, Syed Hoshain, 208, 444
- Bloom (Dr.), 703
- Board of Apprenticeship Training (B.O.A.T.), 530
- Board of Education (U.K.), 666, 670
- Bodhiruchi Math, 746
- Bombay Municipalities (Primary Education), Act (1919), 272, 273, 274.
- Bose, Anandamohan, 441, 443 ; Bipin Krishna, 227 ; Chandramukhi, 117, 118, 216 ; D. M., 232 ; Jagadischandra, 231 ; P. K., 675n, 684, 685, 687 ; Satyendranath (National Professor), 735
- Bourne, A. G., 444
- Boy Scouts, 789
- Bradman, D., 701
- Brahmacharyasramas, 8 ; Santiniketan, 143
- Brahma-Vadinis*, 70, 71
- Brahma-Vidya*, 63, 73, 77
- Brahmodaya*, 68
- Brahmo Samaj, 99, 438
- Brain-drain, 112-114
- Brati-balaka*, and *balikas*, 160
- British Raj, legacies of, 809
- Buddha, The, 79, 123
- Buddhism, Mahayana, 60
- Budhist education, 85-90
- Bureau of Institutional Research (U.S.A.), 689-90
- Burnham Committee (U.K.), 322 ; Scale (U.K.), 322
- Burt (Professor), 666
- Butler, Harcourt, 94
- C**
- Calcutta University Act of 1951, 237
- Calcutta University Commission, 1917— see Sadler Commission.
- "Calf-love," 659
- Cambridge University, Board of, 521
- Cameron, C. H., 214, 434
- Campus activities, forms of, 789
- Case die Bambini*, 253
- Casteism, 603
- Catherine the Great, 654
- Centres of Advanced Study and Research, 440, 495, 821
- Central Advisory Board of Education, 738 ; on attendance in nursery schools, 261 ; on Three-Year Degree Course, 482-83
- Central Board of Social Education, 579
- Central Welfare Board, 261
- Chagla, M. C., 533, 751, 754
- Chakrabarty, D. N., 746, 748n
- Chamanlal, Dewan, 746
- Charity Commission (England), 318
- Charkha*, 203
- Charlemagne 649
- Charter Act (1813), 31, 32, 164, 430
- Chatterjee, Bankimchandra, 78, 94, 217, 218 ; Sunitikumar, 723, 742, 743.
- Child, and the Community, 17-19 ; education, 18, 245-48 ; behaviour, 401-03 ; care, 18, 261 ; emotions, 404-08 ; guidance, 18, 261
- Child mind, 403-08 ; Psychology, 18, 403 ; socialisation of, 19.
- Christ, Jesus, 123
- Christie, John, 366
- City College, Calcutta, 438
- Civil Service (India), 809
- Class-room testing (U.S.A.), 689-90
- Clerk, George, 218
- Code of conduct for students (ancient India), 69, 70
- Code of student life, 798
- Co-education, 92, 635-74 ; and adolescence, 639, 641, 644 ; and discipline, 667-68 ; and India, 643-47, 669-74 ; and sex-behaviour, 667-69 ; arguments against, 640-41 ; arguments in favour of, 641-42 ; definition of, 637 ; different senses of the term, 635 ; early experiences of, 647-49 ; effects of, on boys and girls, 672 ; real test of, 673 ; the problem of, 639-643 ; in ancient times, 647-49 ; in Bulgaria, 655 ; in England, 649-53,

- 662, 669 ; in France, 653 ; in Germany, 654 ; in Italy, 653 ; in Russia, 654-55 ; in Scandinavian countries, 655 ; in Spain, 653 ; in Switzerland, 654 ; in U.S.A. 655-57
- Cohen, A. A., 334
- Co-instructional institutions, 637
- Colleges in India, types of, 471-72 ; new, establishment of, 841-42
- Colour-bar (in education), 656
- Colvile, James, 243
- Comenius, 6, 254
- Commission on Teacher Education (U.S.A.), 427
- Committee, on Emotional Integration, 382, 383, 753 ; on General Education (U.G.C.), 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 521 ; on Indian Examination Reform (U.G.C.), 676, 678, 701 ; on Religious and Moral Education, 121, 124, 125, 425, 850 ; Standards of University Education, (U.G.C.), 441, 510, 618n, 622, 627, 628-34 ; on Standards of University Education, recommendations of, 628 ; on Student Life and Interests, 801
- Common language, 720, 721, 722, 728
- Common School system of Public education, 382
- Common Schools (India), 827, 837
- Communalism, 603
- Communist Youth League, 333
- Community and the individual, 1-9
- Community education, 19
- Compensatory grace marks, 679
- Complex Method, 183, 282
- Comprehensive high school (U.S.A.), 308
- Compulsory and free education, 827, 837
- Conference on National Education (1945), 194
- Confucius, 123
- Congress (Indian National) as a Party, 808
- Continuation schools (England), 322
- Continuing education, 537, 575, 588, 589, 593n, 600
- Convocation address (in ancient India), 70, 72
- Correspondence courses, 537, 562, 575
- Cost per pupil in schools and colleges (India), 785
- Cotton College (Gauhati), 233
- Council of Principals (England), 412
- Counselling, 18
- Course objectives, 676, 677 ; and achievement tests, 676
- Courses of study, rationalisation of, 630
- Craft training (see also "Work experience"), 279-80, 281, 282, 283, 287, 300, 304, 322
- Craze for University (Collegiate) education, 612
- Creches, 260
- Croft, Alfred, 441
- Cullis, C. E., 231
- Cultural exchange (Indo-British), 210
- Cultural freaks, 727
- Cultural Revolution (Great Proletarian China), 323
- Cunningham, J. A., 231
- Curriculum (Teachers' Colleges), 411-14
- Curzon (Lord), 227, 449
- D**
- Dacca College, 233
- Dacca University, 482
- Dalhousie (Lord), 215
- Darjeeling College, West Bengal, 238
- Dasgupta, A. K., 494-95 ; J. N., 231 ; Sashibhushan, 84, 84n, 743
- De, Harinath, 231
- Deb, Raja Radhakanta, 214, 351, 432
- Delhi College, 207 ; University, 482, 783
- Democracy and education, 812-14, 818-19
- Desa-Sevikas*, 261
- Desai, D. M., 271n ; Mahadev, 166 ; Morarji, 752, 753
- Devanagri form of numerals, 715
- Devi, Asha, 182
- Dewey, John, 2, 7, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 35, 45, 60, 183, 184, 254, 700
- Dhanurveda*, 62
- Dialects, Indian, 712
- Dinkar, R. D., 722
- Discipline (see also under "Indiscipline"), a concept of harmony, 771 ; a method of approach, 767 ; a two-way traffic, 818 ; and ancient India, 69, 70 ; and conformism, 764 ; and democracy, 766 ; and values, 766 ; meaning of, 763 ; shock-absorber of social tensions, 765 ; (student), 109, 127-28.
- Dual Colleges, 646
- Dual institutions, 637, 644, 669
- Duff, Alexander, 27, 102, 207, 214, 351
- Durant, Will, 746
- Dutt, Romesh, 209
- E**
- East, Edward Hyde, 102, 129, 207, 432
- East India Company, 434
- Ecole Nouvelle*, 136, 138
- Ecoles Maternelles*, 259n
- Educated people, proportion of, in labour force, 551-52.
- Education, a means of self-improvement, 1 ; a multi-linear concept, 317 ; a national system of, 30, 50 ; and employment, 855-57, a preparation for life, 11 ; a social mission (Tagore), 155 ; a spiritual process, 79 ; a way of life, 58-61, 81 ; adjustment to employment opportunities, 540-45 ; adult (see Adult Education) ; an instrument for a career, 528-31 ; ancient and modern, difference between, 75ff ; and changes

- in values, 81 ; and city life, 22 ; and experience, 12-17, 60-61 ; and full employment, 826 ; and humanism, 74 ; and integration of individual with society, 2, 3, 79, 369 ; and juvenile delinquency, 247 ; and national integration, 369 826, 836 ; and politics, 242, 327, 804-24 ; and religion, 79 ; and social distance, 1 ; and social integration, 2, 3, 79, 369 ; and social perspective, 11 ; and the Nation 28-57 ; and the role of the State, 4 ; and the social process, 79 ; and the urban society, 19 ; and unemployment, 549-552, 612, 855-57 ; anti-people, 30-36 ; as a concurrent subject, 840-41 ; as a social concept (Tagore), 149-51, 152 ; as social service, 79, 204 ; Basic (see under "Basic Education") ; Buddhist, 85, 86, 90 ; Centre's responsibility for 825-26 ; Code (1904, England), 321 ; Compulsory and free, 827, 837 ; Cost of, 493-94 ; Council of, 211, 213, 214, 434, 435 ; definition of, 7 ; dual system of, 761 ; elementary (in U.S.A.), 355 ; expenditure on, and economic growth, 608 ; examination-oriented, 618, 678, 680, 685 ; for Life, 145 ; for the mass or the elite, 128-34 ; for women in modern India, 117-21 ; General, 2, 3, 505-27 (see also under "General Education") ; Government voice in, 813 ; in ancient India, 58-79 ; higher, in India : historical retrospect, 428-56 ; in free India, 457-504 (see also under "Higher Education") ; investment in, 490-91, 493, 504 ; in Science or Humanities, 115-16 ; in Science or Technology, 5, 74, 75, 109, 111-15 ; its urban origin, 21 ; lack of rural bias in, 541 ; Marxist view of, 310-311 ; medium of, 218-19, 223, 749-56, 827 ; moral, 121-27, 370, 399, 425, 443 ; Muslim, in India, 82-84 ; National Council of, 153 ; National Perspective Plan of, 47 ; Part-time (England), 322 ; present imbalances, 91-96 ; preponderance of women in (U.S.S.R.), 312 ; Pre-school, 245-61 ; primary (see under "Primary Education") ; progressive, 15, 35, 60 ; rural, 19, 22ff, 25, 210 ; secondary (see under "Secondary Education") ; secular, 79 ; technical (see under "Technical Education") ; tendency towards specialization in, 110 ; the primary purpose of, 6 ; traditional, 35 ; under Hindu kings, 87-91
- Education Commission (1882), 224, 264n, 265, 266, 441-44
- Education Commission (1902), 225-27
- Education Commission (1964-66), 5, 26, 48, 49, 52, 53, 54, 95n, 105, 106, 110, 111, 112, 113, 115, 115n, 124, 125, 196, 256-57, 285-88, 285n, 369, 370, 376-83, 391, 392, 475-82, 484, 493, 499, 510n, 512, 536, 537, 537n, 544, 545, 545n, 550, 551, 561, 562, 568, 569, 577, 579, 580, 581, 583n, 584, 585, 597n, 608, 609, 612, 738, 738n, 749, 750, 752, 753, 856, 857
- Education Commission (1964-66), justification of, 476-77 ; on adult education, 579 ; on basic education, 285-88 ; on break of secondary and higher secondary stages, 569-70 ; on employment pattern, 545ff, 552-53, 856 ; on illiteracy, 577 ; on pre-school education, 256-57 ; on proper articulation between different stages of education, 570 ; on teaching of science subjects, 570 ; on the objectives of pre-primary education, 256 ; on university autonomy, 499
- Education, Chinese, 26, 325-35
- Education in ancient India, 7, 58-79 ; a way of life, 58-61 ; admission tests, 64 ; an assessment, 72-79 ; aims of, 73-74 ; and discipline, 69-70 ; for the mass, 67 ; for women, aims of, 120-21 ; for women, contrast with western system, 73-74 ; for women, lack of, 91 ; position of women in, 70-71 ; syllabus of studies, 65 ; the teacher and the pupil, 66-68
- Education in China, 325-35 ; and Party, 330-31 ; and politics, 327 ; and Revolution, 331 ; concept of, 327-28 ; mass-line theory of, 330, 330n ; objects of, 327 ; structure of, 334-35.
- Education in Japan, 335-48 ; centralisation of State control over, 339 ; eclecticism in, 339 ; equal right to, 342 ; higher education in, 336 ; Imperial Rescript (1890) on, 336 ; Policy of Occupation relating to, 341-42 ; Programme of studies (Secondary) in, 346-47 ; quasi-military discipline in, 338 ; role of State in, 338-39 ; secondary education in, 336-37 ; structure of secondary education in, 340-41, 344-45 ; structure of, in pre-Occupation era, 336-40 ; universal compulsory (Primary), 336, 337 ; vocational, 347
- Education in U.S.S.R., 309-16 ; planning of skills, 311 ; general structure of, 312, 315 ; higher, 313-14 ; preponderance of women in, 312 ; "Rules for Pupils," 315-16.
- Education Mission (U.S.) in Japan, 326, 342-44
- Education National, 36ff, 41-43 ; concept of, 43ff ; Congress (Indian National) Policy on, 36-37, 39, 40 ; Seminar on, 43ff ; system of 50, 448
- Education Despatch (1854), 33, 214, 216, 218, 219, 264, 265, 441
- Educational achievement, inadequacies of, 94-96 ; backwardness in India, 604-08 ; institutions, withdrawal of

- Government support from, 224 ; process, adjustment of the child to the, 74 ; programmes, to be separate for boys and girls ? 663-66 ; Psychology, 401 ; standards, 604-634 ; standards and examination, 618 ; standards, deterioration of, 609, 611-21, 629 ; standards, improvement of, 301, 302, 350, 825 ; values in modern India, 105-134
- Eleven-class schools, object behind the concept of, 613 ; difficulties faced by, 613
- Elite, new class of, 761
- Ellenborough (Lord), 218
- Elmhurst, Leonard K., 159
- Elphinstone, Mountstuart, 31, 33, 209, 433
- Elyot, Thomas, 648
- Emerson, R. W., 700
- Emile*, 17, 139, 250, 251
- Emotional Integration, Committee on, 382, 383, 753.
- Enforcement of discipline, a negative way, 788
- Employment and Five-Year Plans, 552-55 ; planned policy of, 553-54 ; Pattern and man-power needs, 545-52.
- Engineering and technical education, development of, 534, 535.
- Engineering Colleges in India, 371, 534
- Engineering education, 35
- Engineers, over-production of, 531 : unemployment among, 533-34, 544.
- English as optional subject, 298, 299, 734 : as school subject, 298, 299, 734 : study of, to be strengthened, 754 ; teaching of, 735, 740, 757-58 ; failures in, 725 ; or Hindi, whether to be taught as compulsory languages, 707, 713
- English education, advent of, in India, 99-105, 352 ; aim of, 288 ; and British interests, 221 ; as creating gulf between city and village, 24 ; demand for, 353 ; "filtration" theory of, 2, 9, 209 ; Government aid for non-official efforts in early years of, 207 ; impact of, 35 ; its class orientation, 23 ; Macaulay on, 103, 352
- English educational system, curricular construction of, 324 ; structure of, 324-25.
- English language, 706, 810-12 ; a force for national integration, 369 ; a political issue, 706 ; and Indian unity, 713 ; and "slave mentality," 726 ; as a functional language, 756-62 ; as a national language, 724-729 ; as associate language, 716, 718 ; as India-World link language, 713, 725 ; as language of administration, 750 ; as library language, 755 ; as medium for all-India examinations, 725 ; cannot be a link language, 711 ; divides (Indian) people into two nations, 726 ; its use as medium of instruction, 52, 408, 481, 496, 706, 707, 734 ; not a badge of slavery, 711 ; not geographically limited, 725 ; preferred to Hindi as second language, 724, 724n ; reasonable proficiency in, for Master's degree, 750 ; role of, 706, 710
- English medium schools, 761
- English terms, equivalent of, in regional languages, 758, glossary of, 838
- Enrichment of Curricula, 609
- "Equivalent scores," 686
- Esperanto, 736
- Evening classes, 537
- Examinations, 675-705 ; "a dreaded experience," 704 ; a social event, 701 ; a test of memory, 771 ; and course objectives, 676, 705 ; and objective testing, 688-93 ; and payment by results, 298 ; and use of modern techniques, 826 ; "average scores" in, 699 ; essay type, 675, 680-87, 705 ; essay type, defects of, 680-81 : where appropriate, 681 ; essay and objective types of, assessment of, 693-700 ; "equivalent scores" in, 699 ; fear of, 298 ; luck and chance in, 704 ; objectives of, 618, 676-80 ; "raw scores" in, 686 ; reform of, 632-33 ; supplementary, 696-97 ; system, conditions of good, 688-89 ; to be a real test of merit, 617 ; "true mark" in, 696, 699 ; undue importance of, effect on, 776, 777 ; Zakir Hussain Report on, 191
- Examiners, instructions to (Calcutta University), 681 ; "standard errors," of, 696, 699
- Expenditure on education (U.S.A.), 309
- Extension services, 542, 580, 581

F

- Faculty-student participation, 849
- Failures in English, large percentage of, 725
- Family system, disintegration of, 787
- "Filtration" theory of English education, 2, 9, 209
- Folkhøjskole*, The, 174-81, 290
- Formal learning and education, 587
- Four-year Honours course, 484
- Free and compulsory education, 269, 827, 837
- "Freedom, first," 238, 241
- Froebel, F. W. A., 6, 139, 205, 245, 247n, 252-53, 254
- Full employment, 551, 552, 552-57
- Fuller, Bamfylde, 154, 239
- Further education, 575n, 588
- FZO* schools (U.S.S.R.), 540
- FZU* schools (U.S.S.R.), 540

INDEX

G

Gajendragadkar, B. P., 788
 Gandhi (M. K.), 6, 12, 13, 16, 46, 123, 124, 160, 205, 221, 245, 298, 744, 772.
 Gandhi, as a Path-breaker, 163-204
 Gandhian philosophy of education, 163-66, 173.
 Gandhiji's concept of primary education, 165, 166.
 Gandhiji on higher education, 171-72, 202 ; on machines, 184, 185 ; on medium of instruction, 202-203 ; on Sanskrit, 744.
 Ganguli, Kadambini, 118
 General Education, 2, 3, 505-27 ; a new approach, 512 ; a special area of study, 506, 512 ; a technical phrase, 505 ; and adult learning, 588, 593 ; and general knowledge, 506 ; and specialisation, 508, 509 ; and technical education, 528, 529 ; assessment of, 519-27 ; basic idea of, 509, 521-22 ; concept of, 505-09, 512, 525, 773 ; conflicting views on, 519-23 ; course, 483, 506, 512, 514-18 ; curricular content of, 514-18 ; difficulties of, 523-25 ; grants for (U.G.C.), 525 ; in Universities, 513 ; lack of interest in, 524 ; method of teaching, 513 ; objectives and purposes of, 509-11, 518-19 ; standardisation of, 513 ; U.G.C. Report on, 514, 520n, 521.
 General Assembly Institution, 433
 " Gentleman farmers," 541
 George, A., 687
 Ghose, Aurobindo, 40, 78, 124, 153
 Ghosh, J. C., 497 ; Kalimohan, 159 ; Monmohan, 231 ; Rashbehary, 40, 153, 231.
 Girl Guides, 789, 790
 Girl pupils, percentage of, 643
 Gita, The, 123
 Glossary or Indian language equivalents for foreign terms, 838
 Gokhale, G. K., 19, 37, 40, 94, 132, 209, 227, 229.
 Gokhale-Asutosh controversy, 132-33
 Gopalswami, R. A., 559
 " Grace " marks, 618, 679, 697-99
 Grading of answers, 695-97
 Graduates, first, of Calcutta University, 118 ; first lady, Calcutta University, 118 ; increase in the number of (estimate), 548 ; requirement (estimate), for industrial employment, 547
 Graft, 809
 Grammar School, 649
 Grant, Alexander, 227 ; Charles, 31
 Granth Sahib, 123
 Grants Committees, 472
 " Great Leap Forward," 326, 331, 334
 Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution—
 see " Cultural Revolution."
 Great Society, The, 1, 8

Green, Gretchen, 159, 160
 Grundtvig, N. F. S., 6, 176-77, 179, 181
 Gujarat University, 513
 Gupta, Atulchandra, 595
 Gurukul Kangra University, 513
 Gurukulas, The 8, 80 177

H

Hadow (Committee) Report (U.K.), 259, 260, 300, 317, 361.
 Half-work, half-study schools, 328-329, 335
 Hamilton, C. J., 236
 Hardinge (Lord), 211
 Hardinge Professorship of Mathematics, 231.
 Hare, David, 2, 7, 102, 129, 207, 208, 351, 432
 Hare School (Calcutta), 208
 Harington, J. H., 432
 Hartog Committee, 267, 268, 358
 Harvard (University), 656
 Hastings, Warren, 431
 Haverford College, 799
 Heilbronner, Robert, 5
 Herbart, J. F., 251-52
 Hewett, J. P., 444
 Hieuen Tsang, 67, 746
 Higher education (in India), 428-504 ; assessment of, 130-31 ; British policy of, 430ff ; Gandhiji on, 171-72 ; growth of, 491-92, 495 ; low standard of, 838 ; policy of consolidation or expansion, 491-97 ; standards in 621-34 ; and research, 838-45
 Higher secondary course, diversion from, 561 ; examination results of (West Bengal), 615-17 ; streams of, 304.
 Higher secondary course, proposed, 561
 Higher secondary school, 304
 Hiking, 790
 Hindi, as a school subject, 712, 714, 731-36 ; as compulsory subject, 707, 733, 737, 741, 755, 837, as link language, 711 713-714, 732, 755, 756 ; as medium, 760 ; as national language, 707, 720-24, 729, 733, 812, 837 ; as official language, 707, 714-15, 716, 717, 718, 732, 737, 756, 837 ; in Devanagri script, 714 ; no comparable literature in, 723 ; not a single homogeneous language, 709, 721 ; numerical strength of, 721, 729 ; progressive use of, 715 ; spread of, 759 ; teaching of, 740 ; the language of a minority, 722 ; the largest linguistic complex, 712 ; to be the language of the Supreme and High Courts, 715.
 Hindi chauvinism, 732
 Hindoo College, 99, 101-03, 103n, 129, 207, 212, 213, 351, 428, 432, 433.
 Hindoo Mahavidyalaya, 102
 Hindoo School (Calcutta), 208
 Hindu Vidyalaya, 102, 129, 207
 Hislop College (Nagpur), 433

- H**
- Hitler, 662
 Hobbs, 701
 Hobhouse, Arthur, 118, 212
 Hollman, A. H., 175
 Holm-Jensen, P. H., 175
 Honour System (U.S.A.), 799
 Honours courses and Education Commission (1964-66), 484
 Honours teaching, centralisation of, 497
 Hornell, W. W., 236
 Hostal residence for students, U. G. C. Committee on, 842, 842n
 House system, 784
 Howard, B. A., 641, 641n, 642, 642n, 648, 666, 668.
 Howell, Arthur, 352
 Howells, G., 236, 240
 Hugly College (W. Bengal), 238, 670
 Hughli Women's College (W. Bengal), 670
 Hunter, William, 441
- I**
- Ideals of education, in ancient India, 7, 58-59
 Illiteracy and education, 9-12 ; in India, 9, 371, 576-77 ; relapse to, 95
 Imbalances in education, 91-96
 India, a dark period in the history of, 76-77
 Indian Council of Technical Education (see All-India Council of Technical Education)
 Indian Institutes of Technology, 518, 533, 543
 Indian National Congress, Gandhiji's proposal for dissolution of, 807
 Indian students, their self-sacrifice and love of learning, 355
 Indian Universities Act (1904), 446-50
 Indian Universities (Education) Commission (see University Education Commission)
 Indiscipline and glamour, 770 ; and students, 763-803 ; lies in rejection of reason, 769 ; loss of idealism, a cause of, 778 ; pre-disposing influences, 779
 Individual and Community, 1-9
 Industrial employment, levels of skill required for, 538-40 ; Estates, 567 ; Training Institutes (I.T.I.), 531, 534, 543, 544, 562.
 In-service training (China), 335 ; (India), 417-18
 Integrated learning, 506
 Intellectual Elite, leadership of, 821
 Inter-communication, types of, 714, 716, 717
 Inter-Ministry Communication, 719
 International Conference on Public Education, 411 ; Co-operative Alliance, 584 ; Federation of Workers' Educational Associations, 584 ; Labour Organisation, 584 ; University, proposal for, 51, 52, 54
- Inter-sex behaviour, 639
 Inter-University Board, 440
 Investment in education, 490-91
Isa-Upanishad, 61
 Islam, a political and religious force, 77
- J**
- Jadavpur College of Engineering and Technology, 41, 153 ; University, 448, 513, 514, 515
 Jainism, 60
 James, H. R., 234
 Jamia, Millia Islamia, 41, 193, 278
 Jatiya Kalasala (Andhra), 194
 Jatiya Vidyalaya, 41
 Jayaswal, K. P., 234
 Jha, A. N., 744
Jijnasa, 6
 Joint Standing Committee of the Training College Association, 412, 414-15
 Jones, William, 432, 743, 746, 747
 Junior Technical Schools, 534, 543
 Juvenile Court of Honour (U.S.A.), 784
- K**
- Kabir (Saint-Poet), 123
 Kabir, Humayun, 62, 62n, 63, 63n, 66, 66n, 73n, 74, 83, 84, 775, 776, 777, 779, 781, 783, 784, 784n, 785, 785n, 787
 Kala-Bhawan (Baroda), 532
 Kala-Sala, Jatiya (Andhra), 194
 Kalelkar, Kaka-Saheb, 184
Kama-sutra, 62
 Kanchipuram, 429
 Karnatak University, 513
 Kasahara, 161
 Katju, K. N., 745
 Kelly, Fred, 700
 Kennedy Centre (Aligarh), 517
 Kerala University, 513
 Keskar, B. V., 722
 Khaira Professorships, 231
 "Khari Boli", 723
 Kher, B. G., 182, 185, 275
 Kindergarten, 252, 298
 King George V Professorship of Mental and Moral Science, 231
 Kinsey Report, 657
 Kolb, Kristen, 177
 Kolyanov (Professor), 748
 Kothari, D. S., 301, 350, 381, 475, 711, 740
 Kothari Commission—*see* Education Commission.
 Kripal, P. N., 828
 Krishna Chandra, Maharaja, 20
 Ku Klux Klan, 764
 Kulapatis, 8, 67, 75
Kursovaya Podgotovka (U.S.S.R.), 591

L

- Labour Reserves Administration, U.S.S.R., 540
 Land-grant Colleges (U.S.A.), 499
 Language Commission, 715
 Language and Unemployment, 565 ; of newspapers and radio broadcasts, 600n ; Policy, 106 ; politics of, 812 ; Question, 706-762, teaching and medium, 835-38
 Languages without literature or scripts, 707
 Learning a subject, 409-11
 Library language, 482, 739, 755
 Li Fu-Ch'un, 331
 Linguistic cleavage between Aryavarta and Deccan, 709
 Link language, 496, 707, 708-20, 730, 755, 837
 Literacy, a functional concept, 577 ; and education, 577 ; imbalance in, 93-94 ; programmes, ingredients of, 577-78, 584-85
 Little, C., 23
 Livingstone, Richard, 586
 Local Education Authority (L.E.A.), 320-21
 Localisation of industries, 566-67
 Lopez, 746, 746n
 Luther, Martin, 6, 649
 Lu Ting-Yi, 328
 Lytton (Lord), 206, 226, 242, 243

M

- Mackenna, James, 10, 11
 Mackichan, D., 444
 Macaulay (Lord), 30, 32, 103, 104, 106, 128, 129, 206, 208, 210, 264, 265, 299, 352, 430, 706
 Madhava, 123
 Machiavelli, 808
 Macnaughten, 209, 210n
 Madras Christian College, 433
 Madrassa, 31, 207, 213, 262, 263, 428, 429, 431
 Madras University, 514
 Magna Carta of English education in India, 437
 Mahalanobis, S. C., 231
 Maharaja of Darbhanga, 206, 230
 Mahmud, Syed, 182
 Maine, H. S., 218
 Major Universities, 53, 57, 478, 828
 Majumdar, R. C., 74
 Majumdar, Santosh, 159
 Malpractices (in examination halls), 687
 Man-power needs, 372, 541
 Mantua, 649
 Mao-tse Tung, 333, 334, 770, 796
 Marathi, 723
 Marshman, 212, 214, 434
 Martin Luther—see Luther, Martin
 Marxism-Leninism, 807

- Mashruwalla, K. G., 166, 175, 183
 Mass education, 835
 Matriculates, estimated increase in the number of, 548 ; requirements for, 547 ; unemployment among, 563.
 Max Müller, F., 98n, 746
 May, Robert, 263n, 264
 Mechanisation, 567, 571-72
 Medical College, Calcutta, 213, 438
 Medium of education, 218-19, 223, 749-56, 827 ; of instruction, 52, 480-81, 632, 634, 749, 756 ; of class-room instruction 749 ; of instruction, change in, why necessary, 752
 Mehta, Mrs. Hansa, 366
 Men teachers, preference for, 646
 Midnapur College, West Bengal, 443
 Milkha Singh, 701
 Minto (Lord), 432
 Minto Professorship of Economics, 231
 Mitra, Dinabandhu, 208 ; Digambar, 208
 Mitter, P. C., 239, 242
 Mixed bathing, 638
 Mixed schools, 637, 642, 648, 656 (U.S.A.), 660, 662, 666, 667
 Mixed (teaching) staff in co-educational schools, 660-61
 Mobility of talent, 496
 Mock Parliaments, 789
 Model School, 263, 264, 265
 Modern Indian Languages as third Language, 732
 Mokshacharya Mahayanadeva (Hieuen Tsang), 746
 Monastic schools, 649
 Monasticism, 648
 Montessori, M., 6, 203, 205, 245, 246n, 253-56
 Mookerjee, Asutosh, 78, 132, 133, 154, 446, 447, 448, 450, 498, 819
 Mookerjee, Asutosh, as a Path-breaker, 205-44 ; and Gokhale, G. K., controversy between, 132-33 ; and Lytton 242-44
 Mookherjee, Syamaprasad, 225
 Mookerji, Radhakumud, 63
 Moral education, 121-27, 370, 399, 425, 443
 Mothercraft Training Centre, 260-61
 "Mothers' Day", 788
 Mother training, 258, 260
 Mountaineering, 790
 M. S. University, Baroda, 513, 517
 Mudaliar, A. L., 105, 366, 463
 Mudaliar Commission—see Secondary Education Commission.
 Mukherjee, Bhudev, 441 ; Buddinath, 102
 Muktab, 262, 263, 431
 Multi-lingual character of India, 827
 Muslim education and culture, 81-86
 Mutiny and Indian education, 217, 218
 Mysore University, 513

N

- Naik, J. P., 44, 45
Nai Talim, 193-95, 205
 Nalanda University, 60, 64, 67, 75, 429
 Naliniranjan Sarker Committee, 572-73
 Nanak, 123
 Naoroji, Dadabhai, 218
 Natarajan, 98n, 99n
National Board of Adult Education, 579 ;
 College, 40, 153 ; Council of Education, 40 ; Educational Policy, 706, 741, 754, 755, 756, 825-29 ; Language, 106, 707, 708, 710, 719, 728, 730, 731 ; Merit Scholarship Corporation (U.S.A.), 309 ; Movement (*see Swadeshi Agitation*), Movement, product of English-educated Indians, 221 ; Policy on Employment, 552ff ; School Order (Japan), 340 ; schools, 41 ; schools (Japan), 340 ; Seminar on Adult Education (1965), 579 ; system of Technical Education, 557ff ; University, 41, 50ff, 844-45
National education, 36ff, 41-43 ; concept of, 43ff ; Congress policy on, 36-37, 39, 40 ; Seminar on (Bombay), 43ff ; system of, 50, 448.
National Educational policy, guide-lines for to be laid down by Centre, 820
National Integration, 369, 709, 753 ; and education, 826, 836 ; Conference, 722 ; Council, 753
N.C.C., 789
 Nehru, Jawaharlal, 204, 718, 722, 730, 743
 "Neighbourhood Schools" (India), 828, 835
 Nepotism, 808
 "New Education," 16
 "New School Movement," 6
 New Colleges, 841-42 ;
 New Universities, conditions for the establishment of, 839-40
 Normal Schools, 319
 Nursery schools, 258, 259

O

- Objectives of University education, 459-62
 Objective testing, 689
 Obscurantism, 603
 Occupational education, 450
 October Revolution (U.S.S.R.), 589
 Off-Campus activities, 789
 Office of Student Affairs (U.S.A.), 798
 Official-cum-National language, 707, 709, 720-21, 737.
 Official Language (as in Indian constitution), 708, 720, 730 ; Act, The (1963), 717-18 ; (Amendment) Act, The (1967), 718, 720 ; and Link Language, difference between, 720 ; Commission (1955), 722

- Oguzkan Turhan, 586
 Orientalist-Anglicist controversy, 20, 31-32, 97, 129, 209-10, 430
 Orthodoxy, 603
 Overcrowding in colleges, 484, 486-87
 Over-specialisation, 509
 Owen, Jessie, 701

P

- Palit, Taraknath, 231
 Pannikar, K. M., 745
 "Paribrajika," 71
 "Parents' Day," 788
 Partition of Bengal, 17, 39, 448
 Part-time schools (U.S.S.R.), 592
 Patel (V. J.), 204 ; Vithalbhai, 272
 Patna College, 233
 Paton, J. L., 8
 Pay and prospects, demand for better (for teachers), 817, 827
 Payment by results, 298
 Pay-scales for teachers, 469-70, 488, 489
 Pay schools, 207
 Peace and non-violence, philosophy of, 806
 Peake, C. W., 231, 237
 Pedlar, Alexander, 229, 444, 448
 Pekin, L. B., 637, 637n, 642, 642n, 654
 Peoples' Colleges, 6, 7, 16
 Peoples' College (Danish), *see "Folkehjskole."*
 People's School, 581
 Percentage of pass (Pre-University), 485
 Percival, H. M., 231
 Pericles, 648
 Persian language, 708 ; study of, 210
 Pestalozzi, J. H., 6, 139, 203, 205, 245, 250-51, 254.
 Peter the Great, 654
 Phased reduction of roll-strength in Colleges, scheme of, 623.
 Phillips Committee (U.G.C.), 487, 624
 Physical chastisement (in schools), 661
Pickwick Papers, 757
 Pidgin Hindi, 708
 Pibulsonggram, La-iad (Lady), 602
 Planning Commission (India), 643
 Planning, National, 27 ; social, 27
 Plato, 648
 Political maturity of the Indian people, 806
 Politics of power, 808
 Politics of the Street, 815-18
 Polytechnics, 303, 531, 570 ; (in India), 359, 562.
 Poona University, 13
 Post-graduate study and research, 630-31
 Potsdam, Proclamation of, 340-41
 Pre-Primary education, and State aid, 830 ; institutional care in, 258 ; objectives of, 256 ; role of parents in, 257.
 Presidency College (Calcutta), 129, 208, 212, 213, 219, 228, 233, 234, 670, 783.
 Pre-University Course (classes), 373, 380, 387, 485, 626.

- Priestley, K. E., 326, 328
 Primary education, 38, 39, 94, 95, 262-302
 Primary education Acts in different provinces, 273-75 ; aims and objectives, 292-95 ; and age-group, 289-92, 303-04 ; and the Third Five-Year Plan, 283-85 ; Bill (1910), 268, 270-72 ; course content of, 299-302 ; curriculum of, in different States, 296-97 ; deficiencies of, 276, 77 ; expansion of, 267, 493 ; facilities for higher, 493 ; Gokhale on five basic principles of, 269 ; Gokhale's resolution on, 268, 272 ; in U.S.S.R., 590 ; job-orientation of, 294 ; legislative measures for (compulsory), 270-77 ; policy of consolidation and improvement of, 267 ; stagnation and wastage in, 268.
- Primary teachers, salary scales of, 302
 Princes, privileges and privy purses, 706
 Private education, 574
 Proctorial system, 848-49
 Professional institutions, classification of students admitted to, 542-43.
 Progressivism, 807
 Project Method, 183, 282
 Public education, common school system of, 382, 828, 835
 Public schools (in England), 148, 318, 323, 362-63 ; (in India), 1, 363-65, 761, 835
 Punishment in co-educational schools, 640
Pygmalion, 757
- Q**
- Quantity *v/s* Quality (in educational standards), 609-11.
 Question papers, 685 ; and testing, 685 ; essay type of, 687 ; standardisation of, 685-87.
 Question setting, 694-95
 Questions, multiple-choice, 689, 690-91, 692 ; objective type of, 688-93 ; quiz type of, 689 ; true-false type of, 689, 690.
Quran, 59, 123
- R**
- Rabfaki (U.S.S.R.), 591
 Rabindra Bharati University, 513
 Rabinathnath, and Asian culture, 155-157 ; and Rousseau, 136, 138ff ; and the concept of basic education, 160, 161 ; and the *Swadeshi* agitation, 153-54 ; and the World War, 155 ; as a path-breaker, 135-62 ; on an Eastern University, 156-57 ; on universal values of education, 145.
- Rabindranath's concept of education, 149-51 ; of a *guru*, 146 ; of a model school, 147.
 Radcliffe College (U.S.A.), 656
 Radhakrishnan, S., 105, 128, 232
 Radhakrishnan Commission (see University Education Commission).
 Rajasthan University, 513
 Rajendra Prasad, 742, 747
 Raleigh, Thomas, 444
 Ramkrishna Mission Institute of Culture, 582.
 Ramakrishna Sri Paramhansa, 84
 Ramanuja, 123
 Raman, C. V., 232
 Ramchandran, G., 196
 Rammohan Roy and Western education, 96-99, 124, 129, 209, 351.
 Rangnekar, N. B., 270, 274n, 276n
 Rashtra Bhasha, 733
 Rasul, A., 234
 "Raw scores" (in examinations), 686
 Ray, Jagadananda, 110 ; P. C. (Acharya), 182, 208, 232, 236, 240
Realschule, 463
 "Red Guard Movement" (China), 333
 Regionalism, 603
 Regional Engineering Colleges, 534, 535
 Regional languages, as medium, 469, 480-82, 710, 734, 750-51, 752 ; as official language, 750 ; change over to, as medium of education, 751, 752, 754 ; role of, 707, 715-16, 734 ; writing of text-books in, 735, 736 ; translation of foreign books into, 735.
 Representation of Hindi-speaking areas, 729
 Research, promotion of, author's proposals 843-44
 Residential institutions, 7
 Resolution, Government (1835), 438
 Review Committees (U.G.C.), 449, 627, 630, 702.
 Reynolds, H. J., 119
 Ricardo, David, 24
 Richardson, D. L., 208
 Ripon (Lord), 99
 Ritchie, William, 218
 R. N. Mookerjee Committee (1920) and Apprenticeship Training, 530.
 Robbins' Report (U.K., 1961-63), 494-95
 A. K. Dasgupta on, 494-95.
 Rolland, Romain, 79
 Roorkee Engineering College, 532 ; University, 513
 Rousseau, J. J., 6, 12, 17, 84, 145, 148, 245, 248-50, 253, 254
 Roy, Nikhilranjan, 595 ; Rammohun, 27, 96-99, 102, 129, 205, 208, 351, 432
 Royal (Bryce) Commission (U.K.), 320 ; (Cross) Commission, 319 ; (Newcastle) Commission, 319
 "Rules for Pupils" (1943) in U.S.S.R. schools, 315-16.
 Rural education, 19

Rural Primary education

Act (Bengal), 19.

Rurbanisation, 761

Ryot, the Indian, praise for, 10

S

Sadler Commission (1917), 354-59, 392, 394, 462, 463, 466.

Saha, Meghnad, 232

Saiyidan, K. G., 367

Saiyyid, Ahmad, 441

Sayyid, Mahmud, 441

Saktiki, 71

Samavarjana, 70, 71, 128

"Sandwich" courses (in technical education), 537, 562.

Sangh, Hindusthan Talimi, 193, 195

Sankara, 123

Sanskrit, 60, 723, 725, 737, 741-749; a dead language? 747; as a bond of Indo-European unity, 745; as a link language, 711n; as national language, 741ff; denigration of, 743; importance of, 742; language of international communication, 747; place of, 741-49; removed from list of compulsory subjects, 742; study of, 210, 352; teaching of, 743; "the uniting bond of India," 744, 745, 746.

Sanskrit College, 207, 428, 431, 432, 433

Sanskrit Commission, 742, 745, 746

Santiniketan, 17, 111, 136, 144-49, 180, 205; a way of life, 148; its ideal, and estimate of, 147-49.

Sapru Committee on Unemployment in U.P., 358.

Sarbadhikari, Devaprasad, 208

Sarbadhikary, S. P., 237

Satellite townships, 567

Sargent Report, 38, 194, 275, 277, 303, 360-62, 365, 558, 608.

Sarker, Naliniranjan, 532

Sastri, Bhagabatkumar Goswami, 231; Gourinath, 743; Haraprasad, 231, 237; Lal Bahadur, 718; Sivanath, 98.

Satapatha Brahmana, 513

Saugor University, 513

Scaling of marks (in examinations), 696

School Certificate Examination, 761

School Final Examination, 614-15

School of Humanistic and Cultural Studies, R. K. M. Inst. of Culture, 525-26.

Schools, hiatus between urban and rural, 298.

Schram, S. R. 334

Schurmann, H. F., 332, 333

Science education, 631

Science teaching (Honours), centralisation of, 497.

Scientific Manpower Committee (1948), 468, 469, 469n.

Scientific terms (English), 759; concordance of, 759; glossary of, 759, 838

Score, average, 699

Score, raw (in examinations), 686

Scottish Churches College, 233, 433, 669

Seal, Brajendranath, 231, 236

Secondary education, 303-399; concept of 304, 305, 306; definition of, 303; in China, 325-35; in England, 316-25; in India, 349-99; in Japan, 335-48; in U.S.A., 306-09; in U.S.S.R., 309-16; objectives of, 305-06; relationship with the University (in England), 322-23.

Secondary Education (Mudaliar) Commission (1954), 110, 313, 360, 363, 364, 365-69, 370, 372, 373, 376, 391, 392-93, 397, 463, 475, 483, 542, 556, 560, 561, 562, 567, 608, 612, 825; constitution of, 366-67; its all-India aspect, 367-68; on Sanskrit, 744; on 12-year school course, 483.

Secondary education in India, 349-99; a two-fold problem, 349; an alternative proposal, 396-99; an assessment, 391-96; control of 377, 394; curriculum of, 388-90; defects of, 368-370; diversification of, 371-72, 569, 784; duration of, 378-79, 387, 830-32; expansion of, 356; historical highlights of, 351; Junior Basic, 373, 375-76; purpose, aims and objects of, 356-370; Senior Basic, 373, 375-76; structural patterns, 356, 358-59, 373, 378, 394; transference of, from University to Board, 356; wastage in, 571.

Secondary schools, conversion of, into higher secondary, 379-81, 385, 395, 486, 762; economic viability of, 667; types of (in West Bengal), 304, 305.

Secular education, 77-79, 126

Secularism, 126

Segao method, 6, 166-74, 178, 180

Segregated schools, 637, 657, 658

Segregation, 638

Self-employment, 564

Seminar on Adult Education (in Asia), 582; on National Education (Bombay, 1964), 43ff; on National University (Bombay, 1962), 51ff.

Sen, A. N., 259n, 293, 300; Sukumar, 84n; Triguna, 753, 754.

Senior Technical Schools, 531, 534

Serampore College (West Bengal), 432

Sex differences and academic life, 663-669

Sex education, 62, 69, 75

Shah, A. B., 43, 44

Shah, K. T., 182, 183, 184, 201

Shakespeare, H. T., 209

Sharma, Piyarelal, 185

Shift system (in colleges), 644

Shils, Edward, 57

- Shkoly Vzroslykh Pervoi Stupeni (U.S.S.R.), 591.
 Shukla, R. S., 185
Siddha-tapasi, 71, 76
 Sims, V. M., 700
 Single-sex schools (U.S.A.), 656, 657, 659, 666.
 Sinha, N. K., 209 ; Sasadhar, 140, 141, 158
 Sivaji, 724
 "Sixth Form," 386
 Smith, Adam, 24
 Smith-Hughes Act (U.S.A.), 537
Snataka, 70, 72
 S.N.D.T. Women's University, 513
 Social education, 583 ; Committee on Plan Projects on, 579 ; Central Board of, 579.
 Social integration, 369
 Social studies, 506n
 Socialist education (U.S.S.R.), 590
 Socrates, 123
 Specialisation in education, 110
 Spens Report, 300, 361
 Split consciousness, 728
 Sponsored Colleges, 669, 840
 Srimali, K. L., 366
 Sriniketan, 158-61 ; institutions of, 160-61
 Sri Prakasa Committee (see Committee on Religious and Moral Education).
 Sri Venkateswar University, 513, 515
 Stalnaker, John, 700
 Standard deviation (in marking), 698
 Standard error (of examiners), 696, 699
 Standard of University Education Committee (U.G.C.), 441, 510, 618n, 621, 622, 627, 628-34, 840, 857
 Standards and mechanisation, 571-73
 Standards, determination of, 609, 611-21, 629 ; in Higher Education, U.G.C., Standing Advisory Committee on, 441, 510, 618n, 622, 627, 628-34
 Standing Syllabus Committee, need for, 627
 State University of Iowa, 797-98
 St. John's College (Agra), 433
 Student agitations, number and causes of, 771n.
 Student Council, 799
 Student discipline, in ancient India, 69, 70
 Student enrolment in Colleges, imbalances, in, 839
 Student expenditure (in Delhi), 783
 "Student Front," 821
 Student Government, 48, 795-803, 848
 Student Government Association, 717
 Student Indiscipline, 763-803 ; and parents, 787, 850 ; and student unions, 791-92 ; and the educational system, 775-82 ; a question of means and ends, 846 ; factors of, 776 ; its motivation, 786 ; not wholly an excrescence of academic life, 787 ; philosophy of, 771 ; political core of problem of, 785 ; real problem of, 847-48
 Student leaders and power politics, 791
 Student mind, like a flowering plant, 764
 Student participation in management of their own affairs, 797, 826
 Student politicians 779 ; politics, 770, 771-75
 Student problem, 845-50
 Student unions, 780 ; abolition of, 792-95
 Student-teacher relationship, 109, 849
 Student unity, 774, 793, 821
 Student unrest, psycho-pathology of, 778
 Students and immunity (from law), 767-68, 849-50 ; leadership of, 773-74, 797 ; spirit of revolt of, 778
 Study, time spent (by students) on, 703
 St. Xavier's College (Calcutta), 438
 Sub-standard text-books, 736
Sufis, 84
 Suhrawardy, Abdulla, 234
 Summer Institutes, 440
 Supplementary examinations, 696-97
Swadeshi agitation, 39, 77, 107, 153, 239
 Swarnamayee, Maharani, 443
 Swarthmore College (U.S.A.), 799

T

- Tagore, Abanindranath, 232 ; Devendranath, 98, 144 ; Gopeemohun, 102 ; (Maharaja) Jotindramohun, 441 ; Prasunna Coomar, 220, 447 ; Professorship of Law, 220, 224, 447 ; Rabindranath, 6, 13, 30, 40, 41, 42, 78, 98, 110, 111, 124, 136, 138ff, 145, 146, 147, 149-51, 153-54, 155, 160, 161, 177, 180, 205, 207, 225, 245, 587, 747, 752, 768 ; Rabindranath as a path-breaker, 135-162 ; Satyaprasad, 135 ; Somendranath, 135
Taittiriya Upanishada, 72
 Takli, 182, 203, 204
 Talmud, 59
 Tamil, 723, 736
 Tarachand Committee (1949), 366
 Taraporewalla, J. A., 366
 Taxila, 67, 429
 Taylor, H. J., 675, 682, 687, 695, 696, 697, 698, 699, 700
 Teacher-administrator, 50
 Teacher education, 400-27 ; achievements and targets of, 421-22 ; Commission on, 427 ; in India, 371, 419-26 ; making of a, 414-16 ;-pupil consultations, standing machinery for, 788 ; -pupil ratio, 779, 784 ; status of, 109 ; -student relationship, 110, 849 ; training, certificate course, 425 ;-training scheme (Wardha) of, 190 ;-training staff, 416
 Teacher-parent-child relation to be strengthened, 850
 Teachers and politics, 500, 817 ; and students, loss of contact between, 776, 782
 Teachers, conscription of, 183, 201-02 ; loss in social status of, 776, 784 ; loss of leadership of, 776, 781 ; pay-scales of, 469-70, 827, 835 ; rightful status of, to be given, 827 ; role of, in maintaining teaching standards, 631 ; training of, 753, 826 ; training facilities to be improved, 826

INDEX

873

- Teaching, an adventure of spirit, 400
 Technical course, diversion to, 539, 561
 Technical education and employment, 528-73 ; and General Education, 566 ; an integrated system, 560, 567 ; definition of, 529 ; development of, 535-37 ; early beginnings of, 532-38 ; national system of, 557ff ; progress of, 533 ; "Sandwhich courses" in, 537
- Technicum (U.S.S.R.)*, 313
 Technological institutions (India), 371 ; classification of students admitted to, 542-43 ; types of, and skill, 559-60.
- Tejachand, Maharaja Bahadur, of Burdwan, 102
Tekhnicheskie Uchilishcha, 539
 Telang, K. T., 266
 Television Universities, in China, 335
 Thibaut, G., 231
 Thorndike, Edward L., 586, 589
 Three (or Two) language formula, 732, 733, 737-41, 755, 836-38 ; as modified, implications of, 738 ; burden of learning, 740
- Three-Year Degree Course, 475, 482-91, 624 ; and performance of students, 624-26 ; objects of, 483-84.
- Tilak Vidyapeeth (Maharashtra), 194
 Timbers, Harry, 160
 Tokyo Imperial University, 499
 Tols, 262, 263, 431
 Trade Schools, 304, 534
 Transfer of power and national leadership, 806.
 Tribal education research, 843
 Trevelyan, C. E., 214
 Trivedi, Ramendrasundar, 110
 "True mark" (in examinations), 696, 699
 Twelve-class schools, 830 ; author's proposals and justification thereof, 831-35 ; not supported by U.G.C., 630
- Tylor, Ralph, 676
- U**
- Udaipur University, 513
 U.G.C. Committee on Standards of University Education, 441, 618n, 621, 622, 627, 628-34, 840, 857
 U.G.C., Fellowships, 479
Ultra-Sadhakas, 84
 Undergraduate courses and Education Commission, 484
 Unemployment, a long-term problem, 563 ; among educated persons, 563, 564 ; and illiterate persons, 564 ; and language difficulty, 565 ; and localism, 565 ; and psycho-social factors, 541 ; and self-employment, 564
- U.N.E.S.C.O. Educational Studies and Documents, 584 ; its ideal of Education for Peace, 602 ; on cost of adult education in Africa, 583 ; on eradication of illiteracy, 577 ; on view of adult education, 584-85
- Union-state communication, language of, in India, 716
 Universities Act, Indian (1904), 225-30 ; opposition to, 227-29, 446-50
- Universities in India, Act of Incorporation of (1857), 215, 216n, 222-24, 436-39 ; admission of women to, 216 ; and groupism, 502 ; autonomy of, 238, 445-46, 498-504, 851-55 ; democratisation of University bodies in, 501 ; establishment of, 211, 212, 214-15, 439-40 ; first constitution of, 215 ; 222-23 ; first examinations (in Bengal), 217 ; functions of, 214-15
- Universities in India, growth of (see also "Higher education"), 495 ; linked to social needs, 500 ; misgivings regarding establishment of, 212, 214 establishment of new, 839-40 ; organisation of University bodies in, 473-75 ; power of nomination to University offices, 502-03 ; responsibilities of, 462, 477-78 ; right to appoint professors, 219-20 ; slow progress of, 222 ; study of Indian languages in, 225 ; types of, 470-71.
- Universities (Raleigh) Commission (1902), 444-45
- University and Government, 818-19, 851-55
 University autonomy, 499, 851-55 ; not a one-way idea, 851-52 ; suggestions for preserving, 853-54
- University College of Science and Technology, 235
- University education, aims of, 459-62 ; criterion of, 74
- University Education (Radhakrishnan) Commission, 2, 383, 398, 431, 437, 440, 450, 462-70, 471, 473, 475, 482, 511, 608, 672, 673, 675, 676, 681n, 687, 688, 693, 694, 702, 704, 727, 728, 738, 738n, 747, 850
- University Grants Commission (U.G.C.) (India), 472, 478, 479, 484, 487, 488, 496, 621, 622, 633, 644, 675, 680, 682, 771, 775, 779, 782, 785, 790, 820, 838, 839, 840
- University Grant Committee, 472, 503, 820
 University of Calcutta, 434, 471 ; expansion of, 240 ; four-stages of reorganisation of (1904-24), 230-31 ; New Regulations, 237 ; "not a manufactory of slaves," 242
- University of Calcutta, Post-graduate Council, 237 ; post-graduate teaching, 232-35, 239 ; Professorships in, 231-32, 437.

INDEX

University of London, 434
 University of Mysore, 482
 University Services Commission, need for, 814
Upanishads, 60, 61, 72, 86, 99, 115
 U. P. S. C. Examination, to be conducted in English, 837
 Urban Culture, 21
 Urquhar, W. G., 237
 U.S.S.R. and the problem of illiteracy, 575-76, 589-592

V

Vako-Vakyam, 68
 Vallabi, 429
 Values in education, 4-9, 155
 Varnasram Dharma, 8, 58, 66, 73
 Vedanga, 60, 61
 Vedas, The, 60, 61
 Vice-Chancellor, appointment of, 473, 502, 784, 814
 Victoria College, Cooh Behar, 233
 Victoria Jubilee Technical Institute, 532
Vidya Apara, Para, 61ff
 Vidyamandir Training school, 194
 Vidyapeeth, Gujarat, 194
 Vidyapeeth, Tilak, Maharashtra, 194
 Vidyasagar, Iswarchandra, 443
Vidya-Vichara, 68
Vidya Vivada, 68
 Vikramsvila Mahavihara, 67, 68, 429
 Visva-Bharati, 154-61
 Visva-Bharati University, 157-58, 513, 515 ; institutions of, 157 ; objectives of, 156-57

Vittorio da Feltre, 649
 Vivekananda (Swami), 79, 84
 Vocational course, diversion to, 539
 Vocational education, 528, 529, 537, 571n ; in Japan, 347-48
 Vocational institutions, classification of students admitted to (in India), 542-43
 Vocational schools, 303 ; admission to (in U.S.S.R.), 539
 Voelcker, Dr. 10
Vox populi Vox dei, 817
 Vyas, M. T., 367

W

Wardha Basic Education Movement, 16
 Wardha Conference, 181-87, 197, 200, 204, 279, 282

Wardha Scheme, 187-93, 205, 283, 290, 291, 303, 397, 541, 568 ; assessment of, 195-204
 Wardha type of schools, 12, 46
 Warren Hastings, 43
 War Technicians' Training Scheme, 531
 Welfare State, 4, 787
 W.B.C.U.T.A., 489
 West, Raymond, 227
 Wiese, Leopold Von, 16
 William, K. R., 366
 Williams, Monnier, 746
 Wilson, H. H., 210, 432, 746
 Women, changing status of, 91, 93 ; position of, in ancient India, 70-71, 76.
 Women teachers, paucity of, 645-46 ; preponderance of (U.S.A.), 656, 661 ; success of, 660
 Wood, Charles, 33, 214, 264, 441
 Wood, Education Despatch, 33, 214, 216, 218, 219, 433-36, 710
 Wordsworth, W. C., 236, 237
 Work-based education, 12
 Work experience, 26, 286, 288, 568-69
 Worker, the Indian, 9-10, 11
 Working force, employment pattern of, 545
 World Conference on Eradication of Illiteracy (1965, U.N.E.S.C.O.), 584
 World Federation of U.N. Associations (WFUNA), 584, 602 ; Seminar on Adult Education in Asia (1955), 602

Y

Young Pioneers, 333, 334
 Youth movements, 805

Z

Zakir Husain, 187, 198, 199, 204, 278, 282
 Zakir Husain Committee, 196, 197, 199, 203, 204, 375, 397
 Zakir Husain Report (Scheme)—see Wardha Scheme.
Zenda Vesta, 50
 Zoroaster, 123

ERRATA

(N.B.—Each error is shown against the page and line in which it occurs.
The lines are counted from the top as in the body of the text excluding the chapter-heads but including the sectional headings.)

Page Line

CHAPTER I

1	18	For "corruptors" read "corrupters".
2	33	For "Indian Universities" read "University Education".
20	35	Delete "to".
21	32-33	For "Education, in short, while it enriches...." read "While education, in short, enriches....".

CHAPTER II

30	12	For "this part" read "a part".
41	10	For "passionat" read "passionate".
55	3	Add "based on" after "is".
57	16	For "and the States" read "and in the States".

CHAPTER III

58	13	For "which" read "with".
61	33	For "iśa-Upanishad" read "Iśa-Upanishad".
71	8	For "Saktikī" read "Saktiki".
72	16	For "is" read "was".
73	18	For "he" read "man".
74	8	For "o" read "of".

CHAPTER IV

85	18	For "twenty" read "five".
88	14	For "त" read "त".
89	33	For "Itara" read "Itarā".
96	3	For "ssions" read "professions".
98	f.n. (2)	Add "living" before "widow" and "dead" before "husband".
102	last	Delete "that".

Page Line

CHAPTER V

105	7	For "completely" read "more or less".
112	10	For "and" read "in".
115	f.n. (3)	For "p. 6" read "p. 7".
116	5	For "law" read "low".
121	28	Put a comma after "side".
123	20	For "Indian Universities" read "University Education".
126	f.n. (12)	For "Indian Universities" read "University Education" and for "1949" read "1948".
129	23	For "the English.... Indian notables" read "the Government, a few Englishmen and some Indian notables".
133	24	Delete "in".

CHAPTER VI

136	26	Add "mind" after "subconscious".
139	23	For "published had" read "had published".
146	5	For "teaching" read "teach".
148	16	Add "on" after "impression".
148	17	For "poet" read "Poet".
151	14	For "lays" read "laid".
152	25	For "basic" read "basis".
153	24	Add "In Bengal, of" before "all".

CHAPTER VII

172	1	Delete "or".
172	29	For "pure" read "purely".
175	35	For "Indian Universities" read "University Education".
176	f.n. (5)	For "Indian Universities" read "University Education".
181	26	Delete "out".
182	1	For "now" read "afterwards".
183	13	Add "had" before "commended."
184	23	Delete the second "working."
184	26	For "Ahcaya" read "Acharya."
189	39	For "to" read "the."
196	last	The word "marks" has been printed upside down.
202	6	For "ndependently" read "independently."

Page **Line**

CHAPTER VIII

208	8	For "Cooperation" read "co-operation."
219	28	For "expand" read "expand."
224	35	For "WoFk" read "work."
227	18	For "associatin" read "associating."
230	21	For "rvolutionary" read "revolutionary."
231	12	Add "the" after "with."
231	21	For "Mahalnabis" read "Mahalanobis."
2a4	2	For "Sahrawardy" read "Suhrawardy."

CHAPTER IX

245£	11	For "his" read "the."
248	22	For "itsealf" read "itself."
255	29	Add "the" after "where."

CHAPTER X

262	19	For "acquired" read "required."
265	1	For "place" read "pace."
267	30	For "literary" read "literacy."
268	33	Add "who" after "Gokhale."
274	20	For "did" read "had."
274	25	For "fail" read "failed."
283	22	For "is" read "was."
284	4	Put a comma after "such."
291	2	Add "of" after "use."
298	26	For "had risen" read "rose."
299	30	For "that" read "than."
300	14	For "perhapaas" read "perhaps."

CHAPTER XI

304	16	For "as" read "at".
305	15	Add "the limits of" after "down".
321 f.n. (7)		Add "By Cloudesly Brereton" after "National System".
322	28	Put a comma after "man".
327	3	Delete "of".
334	13	For "thooght" read "thought".
335	30	For "Japanere" read "Japanese".

Page Line

CHAPTER XII

352	34	For "1938" read "1838".
354	6	For "quality" read "duality".
358	24	For "tot" read "to".
360	27	For "12 to 17" read "14 to 17".
361	5	Add "respectively" after "Schools".
365	32	For "in" read "of".
375	13	For "(1964-65)" read "(1964-66)".
381	13	For "classesa" read "classes a".
383	5	Add "school" after "common".
383	f.n. (5)	For "Chap. IV" read "Chap. X".
387	28	For "twelve" read "twenty".
388	33	For "VIII" read "VII".
397	1	Add "+" after "6".

CHAPTER XIII

406	34	For "as a" read "as the".
416	13	For "is" read "are".
427	12	For "under graduate" read "under-graduate".

CHAPTER XIV

431	15	For "mahashaya" read "mahaśaya".
431	19	Add "each district of " after "in".
439	24	Delete "Roorkie (1949)".
440	27	For "development" read "developmental".
442	12	For "Committee" read "Commission".
442-43 33 & 1		Delete "thus helping to meet of examinations".

CHAPTER XV

457	25	For "they" read "the Government of India".
458	23	For "challanges" read "challenges".
461	19	For "(1964-65)" read "(1964-66)".
462	16	For "in" read "all".
466	29	For "be" read "he".
466	32	For "courses" read "course".
468	21	For "infltionery" read "inflationary".
474	4	For "had" read "have".
479	14	For "outstandin" read "outstanding".
483	21	For "Ministery" read "Ministry".
485	15	Delete comma after "actual".
489	27	For "eacher" read "teacher".

B

Page	Line	
489	29	For "schoastic" read "scholastic".
490	5	For "adul" read "adult".
490	18	Add "to" after "still".
492	f.n. (9)	Should read "Education Commission Report (1964-66) Table 12.1".
493	13	For "nclude" read "include".
494	7	For "extensity" read "expansion".
500	24	Add "of" after "functions".
501	20	For "nfected" read "infected".
504	7	For "on" read "an".

CHAPTER XVI

519	7	Delete comma after "skill".
523	24	For "ikely" read "likely".
525	35	For "functioned" read "has been functioning".
526	16	For "used to be" read "are".
526	17	For "determined" read "determine".
526	18	For "worked" read "work".
526	19	For "provided" read "provides".

CHAPTER XVII

533	12	Add "I" after "TABLE".
533	31	For "Plan" read "Plans".
534	20	For "establised" read "established".
554	19	For "draw-backs" read "drawbacks".
561	6	For "point" read "points".
567	3	For "colonical" read "colonial".
568	20	Delete "in the following manner".
569	f.n. (23)	For "pp. 371-72" read "pp. 370-71".
570	1	Transpose "(i)" after "indicated".
570	3	Delete "site".
570	6	For "pursuasion" read "persuasion".
570	25	For "our" read "own".
572	12	For "disperse" read "dispense".
572	24	Delete comma after "policy".

CHAPTER XVIII

575	4	For "young men" read "young man".
576	36	Add "per year" after "per cent".
587	3	For "degree" read "Degree".
589	13	For "preferably" read "Preferably".
592	3	Add "-group" before "14-25".
594	30	Add "was" after "Committee".

Page Line

- | | | |
|-----|----|---|
| 597 | 2 | For "administration" read "administrative". |
| 600 | 7 | Add "which" after "phase". |
| 600 | 21 | For "literacy" read "literary". |
| 602 | 1 | For "nation" read "nations". |

CHAPTER XIX

- | | | |
|-----|----------|---|
| 604 | 17 | For "are" read "is". |
| 607 | 16 | Add "in India" after "Universities". |
| 608 | f.n. (3) | For "21 per cent." read "2.1 per cent." |
| 609 | 20 | Add "the" after "speaks of". |
| 612 | 12 | Delete bracket signs. |
| 613 | 7 | For "district" read "distinct". |
| 622 | 4 | Put a comma after "see". |
| 622 | 35 | For "contact teacher-student" read "teacher-student contact". |
| 632 | 31 | For "Finally" read "Further". |

CHAPTER XX

- | | | |
|-----|----|---|
| 639 | 32 | For "degree" read "Degree". |
| 642 | 31 | Add "of" after "interpretation". |
| 651 | 8 | Put a comma after "affection". |
| 653 | 4 | For "foster" read "faster". |
| 654 | 37 | For "Original" read "original". |
| 658 | 7 | For "at" read "in"; for "co-education" read "co-educational". |
| 660 | 39 | For "Las vegas" read "Las Vegas". |
| 663 | 2 | For "essay" read "chapter". |
| 669 | 11 | For "IIIIV" read "VIII". |
| 670 | 26 | For "has been" read "is". |

CHAPTER XXI

- | | | |
|-----|----|-------------------------------------|
| 689 | 13 | For "type essay" read "essay-type". |
| 695 | 12 | For "imited" read "limited". |
| 698 | 20 | Add "(the examiner's)" after "his". |
| 700 | 29 | For "exercise" read "exorcise". |
| 702 | 26 | For "stduent" read "student". |

CHAPTER XXII

- | | | |
|-----|----|--|
| 708 | 19 | For "throughtout" read "throughout". |
| 711 | 17 | Add "a" after "to". |
| 717 | 12 | For "they" read "the non-Hindi-speaking people". |

Page	Line	
717	22	For "colloqual" read "colloquial".
732	3	After "mass level" add "may fulfil a general need".
736	30	For "always" read "already".
737	22	Add "is" after "fact".
737	23	Delete the comma after "English".
743	3	For "have been that" read "has been that" and begin quotation marks from "Sanskrit".
744	24	Delete "appears".
744	f.n. (13)	For "D.C." read "D.N.".
750	8	Add "or territorially" after "compartmentally".
751	19	For "import" read "impact".
752	35	For "medium" read "media".
753	1	For "national" read "National".
761	34	For "need" read "needs".

CHAPTER XXIII

765	13	Add "necessarily" after "without".
767	13	For "discipline" read "discipline".
782	2	For "more" read "move".
783	4	For "teacherpupil" read "teacher-pupil".
787	24	For "for" read "far".
795	28	Add "that" after "than".

CHAPTER XXIV

804	16	Delete "newly liberated".
807	19	For "onto" read "on to".
809	17	For "justice" read "Justice".
811	6	Delete "on".
821	13	For "thoough" read "thorough"
823	27	For "satisfies" read "satisfy".